DALE KEOWN *INTERVIEW*

X-TRAITOR *ASSASSIN REVEALED*

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DECEMBER 1992

WIZARD No. 16

THE GUIDE TO COMICS

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DECEMBER 1992 WIZARD: THE GUIDE TO COMICS VOLUME I NUMBER 16

■ DALE KEOWN
INTERVIEW

■ X-TRAITOR
ASSASSIN REVEALED

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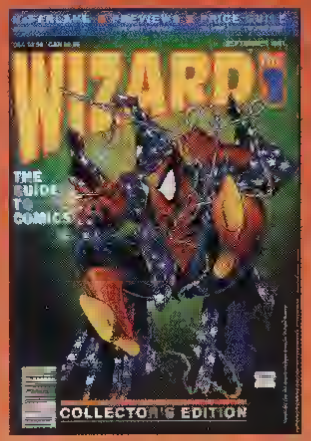
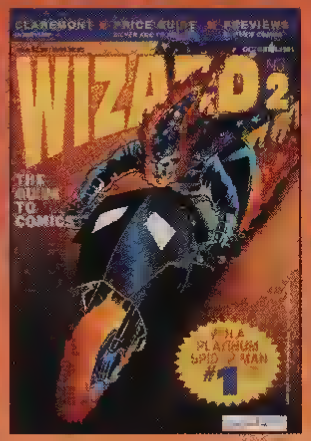
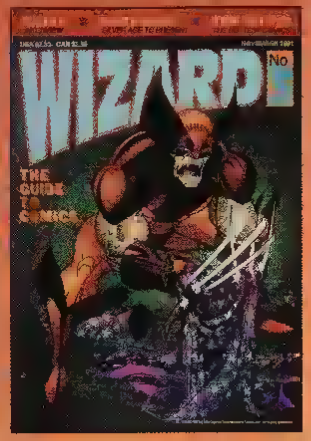
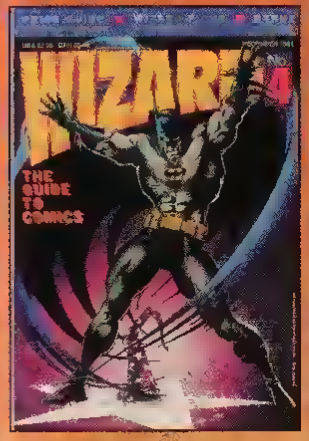
"The Darker Image"

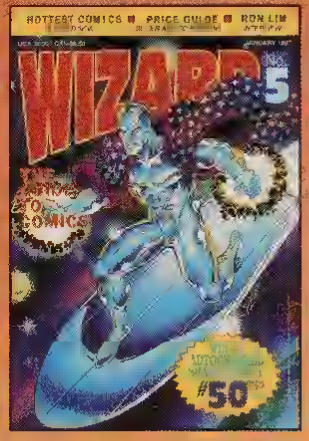
DECEMBER 1992 WIZARD: THE GUIDE TO COMICS VOLUME 1 NUMBER 16

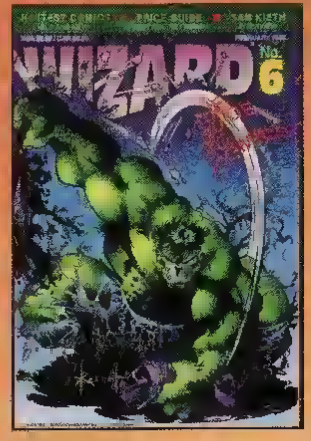


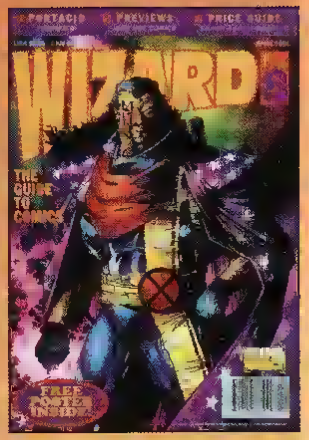


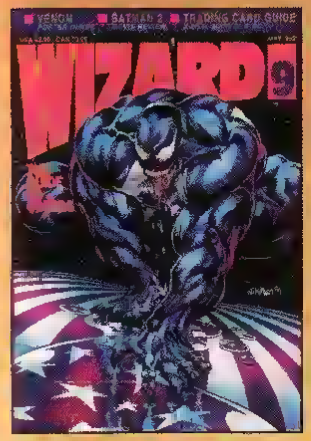


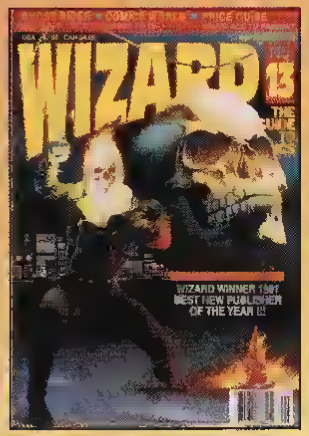


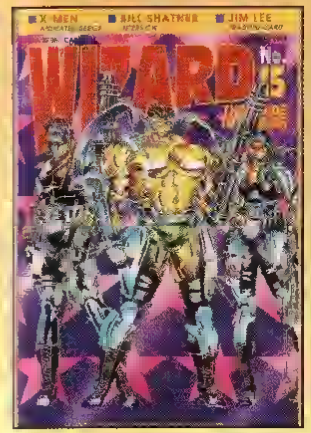












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A Letter From Our PUBLISHER

Gareb meets Dr. Stupid

Another issue of *Wizard* comes to a close for me, but for you the fun has just started. To start off things, let me congratulate all of you that found one of the 1,000 chromium Bloodshot cards randomly inserted in *Wizard* #15. Our buddies over at Valiant supplied us with the cards, and we thought it would be cool to give you guys a chance to get these ultra slick cards normally available only to retailers. (My brother Stephen tells me they now go for about $35-$40 bucks!)

Speaking of card inserts, this month every issue of Wizard comes with two *Predator vs. Magnus* cards, courtesy of the big "V" and the mighty Dark Horse. You wont find these anywhere else, they're a Wizard exclusive! Also check out next month's awesome "Death of Superman" promo card that's also going to be in every issue of *Wizard* #17(yes sir, another exclusive!)

Getting back to this issue, how cool is this cover? It took a bit of doing to get Jim, Rob, Dale and Sam to do a jam piece, but it was worth the effort. These Image guys really know how to cook. Can we top this cover? We can try. Next month we have a kickin' gatefold Valiant cover by Lapham and Layton, and following that is one of the sickest *Wizard* covers ever. It features Venom, Carnage and Spider-Man (can you believe Spidey's only been on the cover once so far?) in a gatefold spread that's gonna knock your socks off. When I asked the cover artist, Wittman, how the piece was coming along on the drawing board, his response was simply "I wouldn't want to be Spider-Man." I saw the piece, and I wouldn't want to be Spidey either.

That's about it. Go, read the book, enjoy. Drop us a line, have some fun. I know *I'm* having fun.

El' Queso Grande,

Gareb S. Shamus

WIZARD
Volume 1
Number 16
December 1992

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SANDMAN AND DEATH ™ & © 1992 DC COMICS

PITT ™ & © 1992 DALE KEOWN

COVER SHOT

Dale Keown may not draw The Hulk any more, but his work is still incredible! For the latest news on Dale Keown at Image Press, and the inside story on PITT, hear it from Dale himself on page 73!

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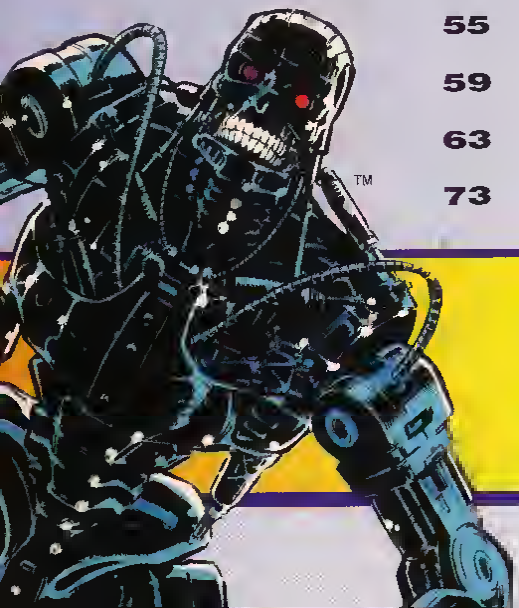

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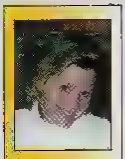
Autographed Image books! See page 106!



Why is Wendy smiling? see page 186!

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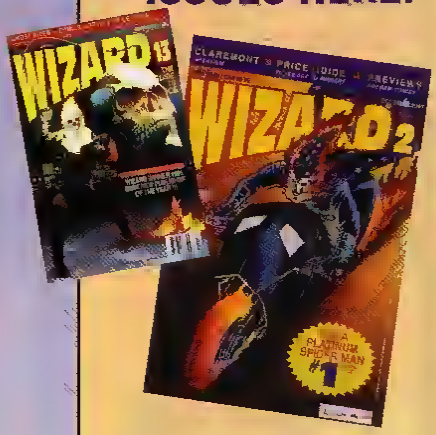

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IF I ONLY KNEW THEN...

Recently, the editor of this magazine asked me what I had learned from my relationship with a particular company, and if I could convey what I had learned without violating libel or slander laws. This was a challenging question, and one I'm glad he asked. I think that fans and newer pros are victimized in the comics business because of their ignorance and trust, and I don't believe getting burned needs to be part of any writer's, artist's, colorist's or letterer's learning process.

The following is not an indictment of any company in the business. I'm only sharing what I have learned from my recent experience in the comics business as well as my seven-year career— and the advice and adventures of many of my peers in comics.

GET EVERYTHING IN WRITING

Never work without a contract, no matter how friendly you are with the people you're working for. There are a number of reasons to have a contract:

You need *in writing* the nature of the work you're doing. An unscrupulous company could, for example, claim that your creator-owned project was work-for-hire. And, while verbal agreements count for something, and I doubt a company could make a false claim stick, they *can* waste colossal amounts of your time and money proving that they're lying.

If your check arriving on time is dependent on your name being on the company payroll, which is in turn dependent on your name being on a contract, and you don't have a contract, your checks ain't gonna come on time, are they? Catching a tardy payroll clerk in the office is a double-barrelled bitch. A contract can help you enforce tardy payments. A contract gives *you* a deadline (or a promise to stick to a schedule drawn up later), and it gives the company a deadline to *pay* you. Don't accept a contract that doesn't specify pay periods and give you the right to leave if your pay is excessively late.

You need your pay scale *in writing*. Memories fail. If you're expecting a check for 25 pages of art at $100 a page, but the company remembers it as $80, and there's no piece of paper to *remind* them what you get paid, you're going to miss that $500— and you're going to have one hell of a time *proving* that $500 is still coming to you, never mind collecting it.

(The week the $500 is lopped off your check will be the week the car croaks.)

Most companies take a while to issue contracts on creator-owned projects, even on-the-ball companies. Don't panic because the contract process is moving slowly.

It's when things don't move *at all*, that a creator needs to review options. No good company or editor will encourage a creator to work without a contract. No company has the right to hold up your work without explanation. (I'm specifically referring to cases where a company claims the right to publish a work that they seem unable to issue a contract for.) Editors are busy people. It happens that return calls are promised, and come later than promised. When return calls never come... well, think about it.

OTHER STUFF I LEARNED

Sometimes, projects and work are promised that never materialize. Experience in the field is the only way to determine who's really going to hand out work, who's "operating" (that is, telling you you'll get work when they have no right and/or power within a company to make such assignments), and who's gladhanding (basically bullshitting, that is, there are folks on the periphery of the field who like to promise work because it makes them feel good— stupid, but true). Sometimes, a company has every intention of giving you the work they promised, and something fell through on their end. A good company won't promise what they can't deliver, an inefficient or poor company will make promises prematurely.

And, alas, the people that make these promises often don't seem to know how to handle the consequences— which means no contract, no calls, just month after month of obfuscation or outright confusion.

STILL MORE STUFF I LEARNED

It's easy, as a young fan, or newer pro, to dismiss advice from older pros. (*I know!*)

You don't want to hear that the guy who told you that you have a swell career at Company X never pays on time, or publishes your work and rips it to shreds later in an interview.

You don't want to know that the company that promised to publish your first work is going to disappoint you terribly, and sooner rather than later. You're getting your Big Break, after all. A credit, no matter how squirrelly, will *mean something*. This, ultimately, is not true— no matter how much you wish for it to be.

Sometimes, you're good enough for the majors, and there's just no work for you. It happens. But maybe you're not good enough. That happens too. That doesn't mean you'll never be, it means you're not ready right now. Be kind to yourself, but be realistic.

Believe me, too, when I tell you that if the only company that will give you work is a company that pays $10 a page for writing, drawing and lettering, that company is not demanding work of you that you'll be able to impress a *real* company with. Those companies are good places to learn (thought not to make a living). Fanzines and amateur press associations are better. You don't resent the work because you have to do it to pay for the groceries or the power bill, you get to do what you want, and you get (in the right fanzine or APA) honest feedback.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING I'VE LEARNED TO DATE

As a friend recently said to me: "Begin as you plan to continue, in business and in life." ■

—Lea Hernandez, writer and artist

SUPERMAN Triangle Numbers 1992 45 thru 1993 2 MAN OF STEEL #18 thru SUPERMAN #75!

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WIZARD NEWS

THE INSIDE SCOOP ON THE WORLD OF COMICS

Go to the MAXX in December

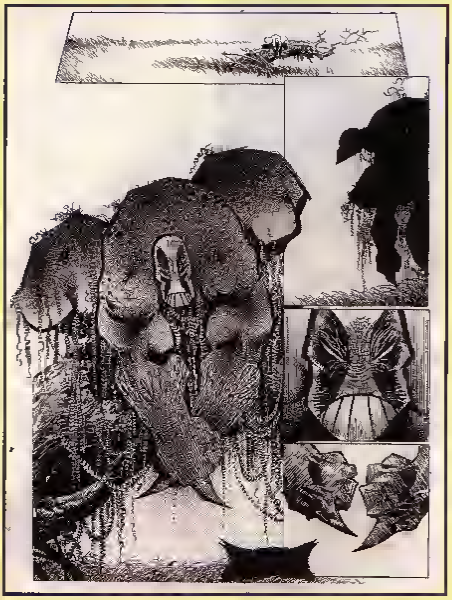
December will see the first issue of *Darker Image*, the new anthology from Image Comics. Along with new material from established Imagers Rob Liefeld and Jim Lee, it will include "Maxx", created and drawn by Sam Kieth, with a script by William Massner-Loebs (Flash, Wonder Woman, Journey).

"Maxx" tells the story of "a not very strong, not very smart superhero," says Kieth. But reality in this story may not be all that clear. Each story will be told from two perspectives. In Maxx's view, he is a superhero fighting monsters in the Australian outback, but his female companion sees him as a helpless, homeless man, wandering the city.

Kieth really appreciates the offer to work with the Image team. "I'm the leech, the parasite. Liefeld and Lee are carrying me along. I tip my hat to them for letting me reach a larger audience with something as unusual as 'Maxx'."

Other characters featured in *Darker Image* will be Jim Lee's "Deathblow" and Rob Liefeld's "Bloodwulf". "Deathblow" tells the story of an ex-hitman for an anonymous intelligence agency who, upon learning that he has a fatal illness, seeks peace and salvation at a monastery.

Though wanting nothing more than peace in the remaining years of his life, Deathblow is dragged into a whirlwind of death and mayhem, and must rely upon his mercenary ways in order to survive.



MAXX © 1992 SAM KIETH

As one of the highest-paid bounty hunters in the galaxy, Bloodwulf's adventures will bring him into conflict with everything from dinosaurs to drug lords, evil corporations and even guys with arms the size of couches (?). Regardless of the threat, Bloodwulf can handle any job, and in doing so, cause a great deal of damage. When we first meet the character, he's in the process of destroying a planet, and the fun is just beginning.

Darker Image, the 24-page color anthology from Image Press, is set to debut this fall with a cover price of $2.50 and each copy of issue one will come polybagged with one of three Image trading cards. The three cards available will be Maxx, Bloodwulf and Deathblow, rendered by their respective creators. As a special bonus, a black-and-white limited edition copy of *Darker Image* #1 (w/o card) will be available at $1.95 for every hundred copies of *Darker Image* ordered.

Galoob Genie Makes Wishes Come True!

Galoob Toys, the makers of the popular Game Genie for the Nintendo Entertainment System, has announced the coming of Game Genie for the Sega Genesis system. The Genie allows you to customize and alter game characteristics. Your player can punch harder, run faster, have more energy and more power, even live forever. Features of the Genesis Genie allow you to have up to five special effects going at once, or turn them off during game play. Along with the Genie comes an offer to subscribe to the quarterly *Game Genie Code Updates*, where you'll be able to get the latest secret codes for recently released games. The Game Genie for the Sega Genesis system should be out by the time this sees print--watch for it!

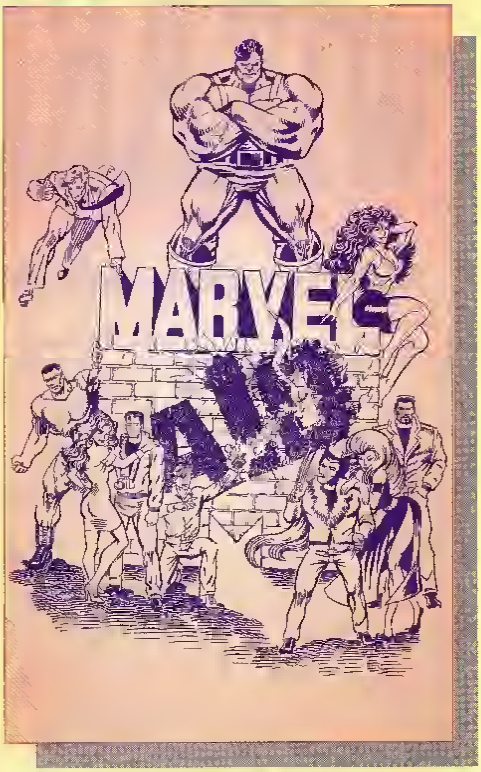
© 1992 MARVEL

Pip the Troll Was Once Normal? Believe It!

In issue # 11 of *Warlock and the Infinity Watch*, the origin of Pip the Troll will be revealed. This comes about after an exciting discusion between the Living Tribunal and Eternity, in which Eternity tries to persuade the Living Tribunal to give him the Infinity gems by explaining how unworthy the present Infinity Watch members are. This talk apparently involves going over the origins of the Watch's members. In the course of conversation, Pip's never-before-known origin is revealed. Don't miss out on the excitement! Just hold on until October 27.

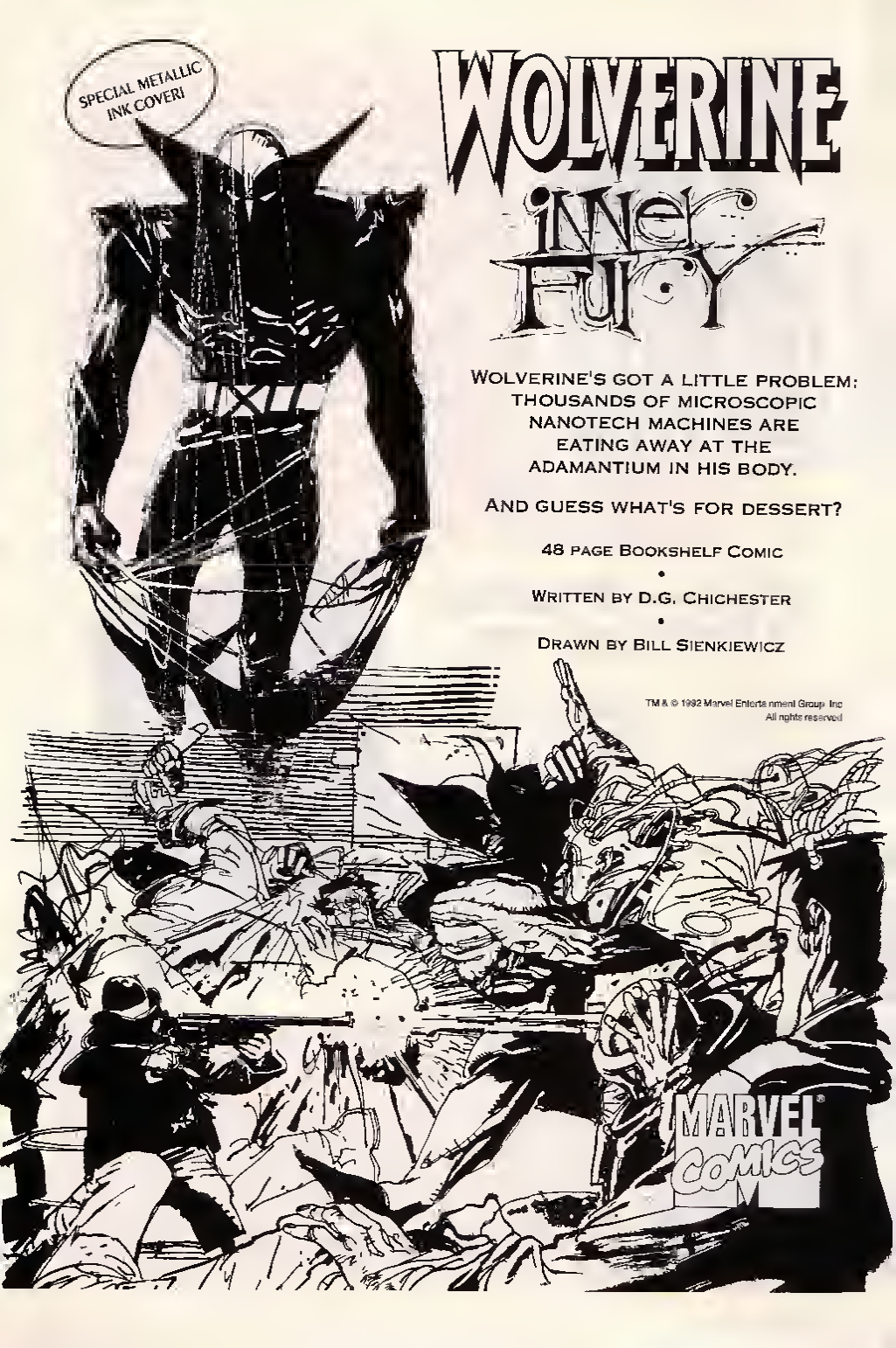
Marvel To Aid Hurricane Victims With Special T-Shirt

Marvel Aid is the name of the new program Marvel Comics has created to help comic store owners in need of help. The first recipients of this program were the hurricane victims of southern Florida, as well as a comics dealer whose store was recently vandalized. To help support the Marvel Aid program, Marvel and Comic Images have produced a special double-print T-shirt (front and back), available at your local comic store. A portion of the sales will go to the aid-relief program. No word as of yet if DC Comics, Image or any other companies will follow suit.



" STREETFIGHTER II: THE MOVIE "

For those of you S.T.II fans that can't get enough of Ryu, Chun-Li, and the rest of the lethal gang from the popular arcade-turned-Super NES game, prepare yourself for the unbelievable. *Streetfighter II*, the live-action movie, is now being filmed in Japan, but little else is known of this sure-to-be excessively violent flick. Who are the actors/actresses, what's the storyline, and more importantly, will Blanka get his own litterbox? More news on this as it's made available, and keep your eyes on the At The Controls and 16-Bit Power video game sections of Wizard for possible updates.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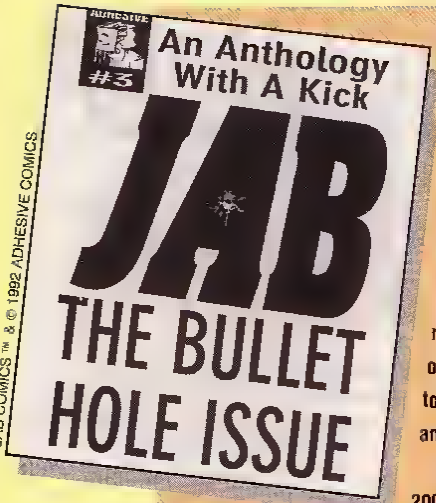


JAB COMICS ™ & © 1992 ADHESIVE COMICS

JAB COMICS SHOT !!

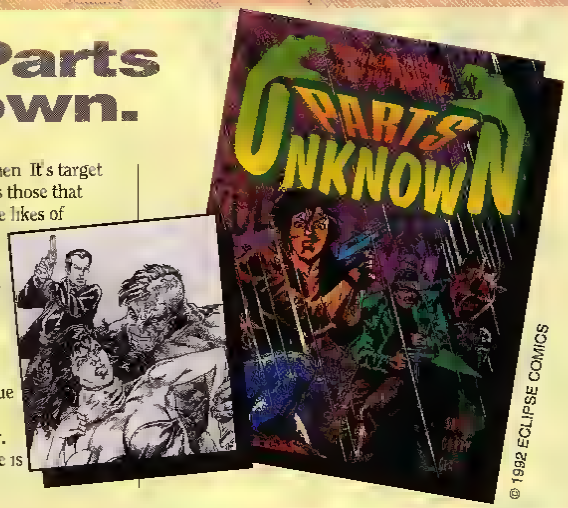
In what Adhesive Comics is calling "...the stupidest gimmick ever...", every issue of *Jab* #3 will be shot. You heard it right, shot. Every single issue will come with an authentic bullet hole through the cover. As an extra-special bonus every tenth copy ordered will come with powder burns on the cover.

To "...try to rise above cheap attention-getting gimmicks that have nothing to do with the comic...", the artists of *Jab* #3 will incorporate the hole (or at least make room for the bullet hole) in the stories of this black-and-white anthology series.

Available in December from Adhesive Comics, P.O Box 200824, Austin, TX 78720-0824 and finer comic dealers everywhere.

From Parts Unknown.

Parts Unknown, the first non movie related comic book to be sold in video stores, has apparently sold out and reorders are now being taken. The number of copies being reordered is larger than the original orders and sales are expected to increase. The book involves two alcoholic detectives who are trying to stop an alien invasion. The aliens are here to mate with Earth women. It's target audience is those that enjoyed the likes of *Terminator, Predator, Aliens,* etc. The first issue shipped in July, the second issue is due out September. Cover price is $2.50



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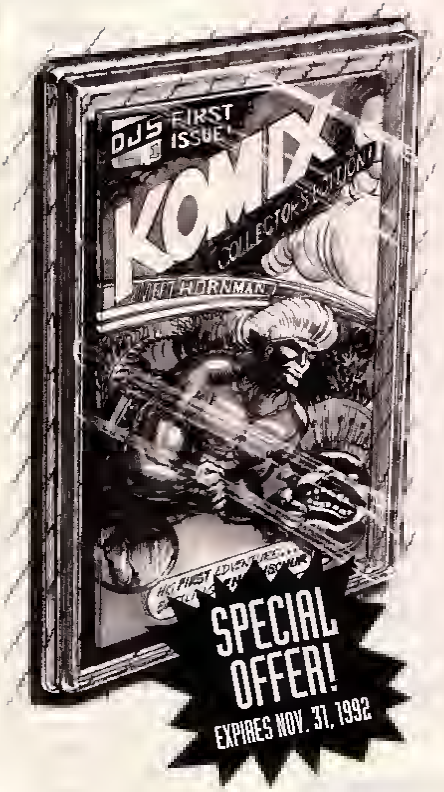
Zen Intergalactic Ninja's Hit Hard!

Zen comics' *Zen Intergalactic Ninja* comic-book heroes have debuted as action figures and are selling out super quick. The August 27 edition of the *Boston Globe* has called the figures "the hottest toys for the fall". Each of the six figures is being packaged with a special "toy collectors edition". The six characters are Zen, Jeremy Baker, Lord Contaminous, Lights-out, Can-it and Garbageman.



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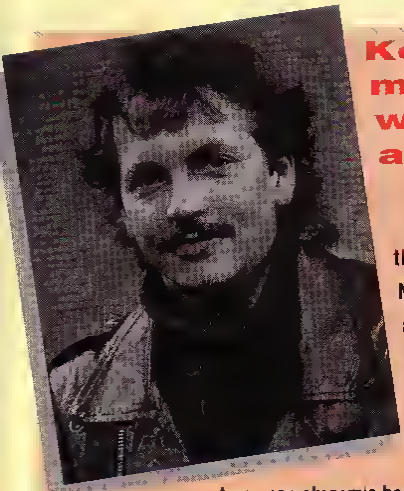


Kevin Eastman gives the world Words and Pictures.

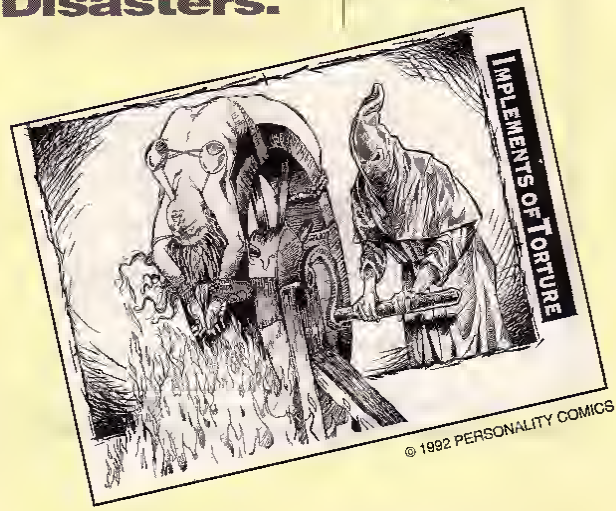
A new museum will open within the historic Roundhouse, in Northampton, MA. Built back in 1856 as a gasworks (did they have gas back then?) and now restored, the Roundhouse will include the Museum of Sequential Art, devoted entirely to one contemporary art form, namely comic-book illustration. The museum, founded by Kevin Eastman, will feature art from early in man's history, like cave art, modern forms of comic art, and many more in an attempt to educate the public and give respect to this often overlooked artform. Visitors will be treated to a tour through the history and evolution of sequential art, and even the opportunity to dive (not literally) into a comic and become "part of the action!" The museum will also sponsor roundtable discussions, guest artists, book and poster signings, and an educational outreach program to schools. Opening shows include Michael Ploog, Bill Sienkiewicz, Paul Mavrides, Gilbert Shelton, Jack Kirby, and more. If you're a fan of comics or just an art buff, this is a must.

Malibu Graphics Merges with Acme Interactive.

Malibu Graphics publisher of the popular *Ex Mutants* and *Dinosaurs for Hire* comic books, has merged with game marketer and developer Acme Interactive to form Malibu Comics Entertainment Inc. This is reportedly the first such union between a comics publisher and video game developer. This affords the two companies a major opportunity to cooperatively produce and market comic based video games. Malibu hints that more comic based games like the Ex-Mutants aren't far behind. The Ex-mutants video cartridge is tentatively scheduled for a November 15,1992 release. Ex-mutants is receiving wide recognition and is expected to make its way back into mainstream comicdom. Though it won't debut until late '93, the promotional bonanza will continue until the release date.

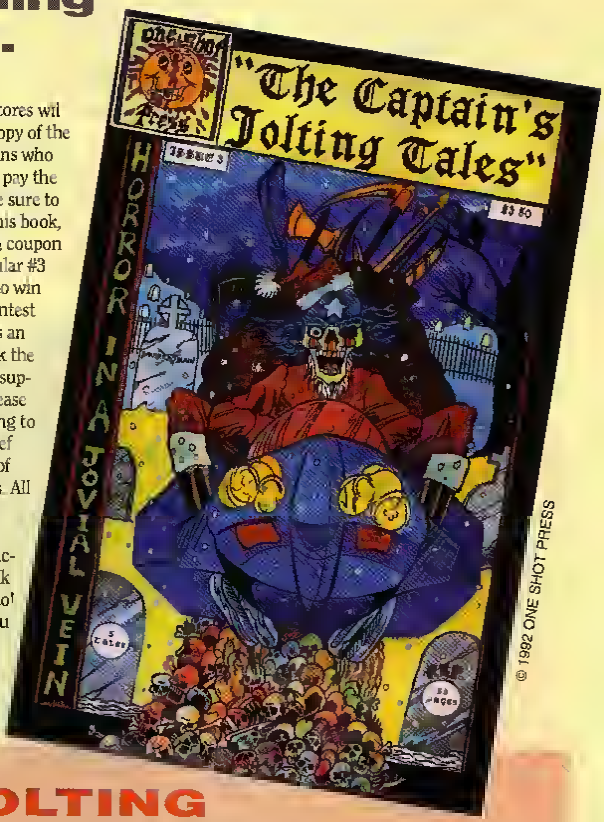
Personality offers Implements of Torture and Great Disasters.

Two new trading card sets from Personality Comics are coming. Shock Cards are available in the *Implements of Torture* and the *Great Disasters* sets. Retailing for $12.95, *Implements of Torture* contains 36 full-color (thank goodness) cards depicting various devices used throughout history to inflict pain on others. *Great Disasters*, also $12.95 for a 36 count color set, has scenes from some very well-known major disasters. (Noticeably absent is the Marvel New Universe) The target audience for these little gems is unknown, but controversy is imminent, so pick up a set today, for yourself or those you want to send a subtle hint to. Enjoy!



Topps Puts the Bite On comics with Dracula #1 and Trading Card Set.

Topps, the baseball card company, has decided to try its hand at comic-book production. Bram Stoker's Dracula#1, due out in October, is an adaptation of the movie by Francis Ford Coppola, which is to be released nationwide Friday, November 13 (when else?). The film from Columbia Pictures stars Gary Oldman, Winona Ryder, Anthony Hopkins, Keanu Reeves, Sadie Frost, Richard E. Grant, Cary Elwes, Bill Campbell, and Tom Waits. The adaptation will be available one month before the movie. It's written by veteran Roy Thomas, pencilled by fan-favorite Mike Mignola and colored by Mark Chiarello. The book comes with four special cards polybagged with the comic that are available only with the book. The book itself is available only through the comic specialty market (your neighborhood comic store). There is also the Bram Stoker's Dracula trading card series. A 100-card set including original art by Mignola and John Nyberg, as well as stills from the movie. The book retails for $2.95, the trading card set is sold in wax packs of 10 cards for $1.00. For collector item fans, Topps is also giving you a chance to buy or win a special limited-edition of Bram Stoker's Dracula #1 which has a unique cover printed on heavy paper with a crimson foil, embossed logo. For every 50 copies of the standard #3 ordered, stores will receive one copy of the special #1. Fans who don't want to pay the premium price sure to accompany this book, may send in a coupon from the regular #3 for a chance to win one of 500 contest copies. This is an effort to thank the fans for their support and increase sales, according to Editor-in-Chief Jim Salicrup of Topps Comics. All these goodies give plenty of things for Dracula fans to sink their teeth into! (Sorry, but you knew it was coming!)



© 1992 ONE SHOT PRESS

JOLTING NEWS

One Shot Press, home of *The Captain's Jolting Tales*, a horror series similar to EC's *Tales From The Crypt*, will contain one of six different horror trading cards, one in each polybagged issue of *The Captain's Jolting Tales* #3.

As if that wasn't enough, the "Krazy Krew" over at One Shot Press have decided to make this issue something extra special by having 1,000 special-limited edition *T.C.J.T.* #3 randomly inserted in store orders, signed by the entire creative team of the issue. Since these books appear identical to the regular edition on the outside and all the books will be poly-bagged, it will be impossible to tell the limited-edition books from the regular edition ones until the books are purchased and opened. *The Captain's Jolting Tales* #3 will be available in comic stores late Nov./ early Dec.

Pendulum swings around in November.

Pendulum, a new four issue mini-series from Adventure Comics debuts in November. The main character is Hildegaard Row, a PhD who for the past five years has been trying to earn repect in the realm of research and experimentation. His efforts to perfect an immortality formula keeps the money flowing. After tragedy and misfortune strike he attempts to take his own life by injecting himself with a crude form of the immortality serum. When this fails to kill him he decides to go out fighting. Pendulum is born. The series will be drawn by penciller John Drury and inked by Ted Slampyack. Covers will be by Steven Butler and Ken Brach. Catch the *Pendulum* in November.

Nausicaä fans beware. Part III is coming.

The wait for *Nausicaa Part III* to arrive from Viz comics is over. Negotiations have yielded the rights to go ahead with production. Each issue of the Part III series will be a 56-page square-bound black-and-white book printed in Japan. The books will retail for $3.95 each. Issue #1 ships in December.

FemForce: The Movie

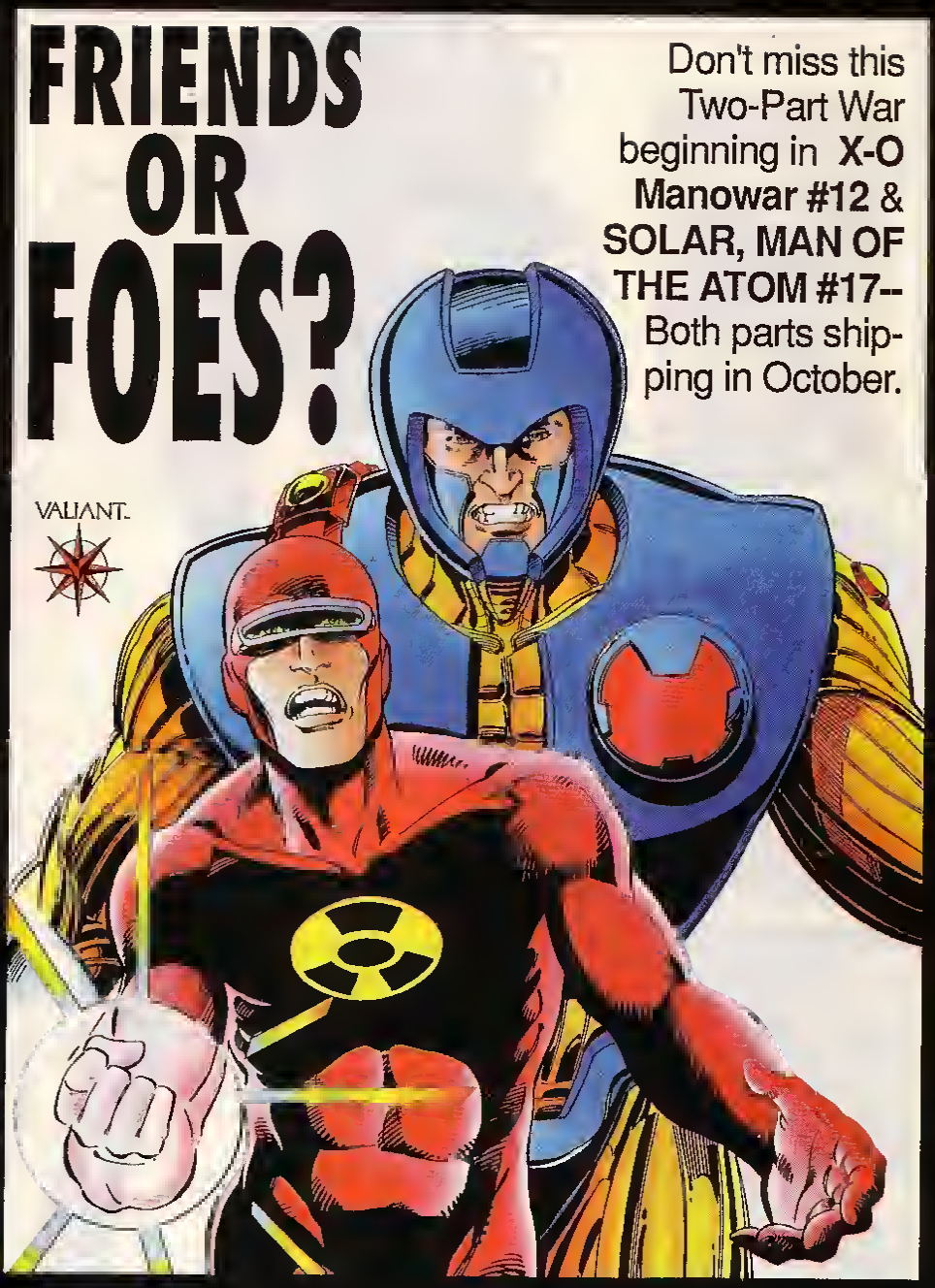
Negotiations are underway to bring Femforce to the small screen. Americomics is involved in talks with an undisclosed network and hopes to have everything settled so the movie can be ready for a fall of '93 debut. The flick will star Sharon Blair as Synn. Keep your fingers crossed.

NO CUTE ELVES

I, Lusipher, the black-and-white bi-monthly fantasy published by Mulehide Graphics, enters its second year of publication with issue #7 of the series. *I, Lusipher* is a magazine-sized publication, $2.50 cover price, and chronicles the adventures of the mercenary elf known as Lusipher on the magical world of Aminetah. Described as the "anti thesis of Elfquest" by many of its readers, the storylines are dark and deal with the standard fantasy concepts with the addition of witty humor, laced with a strong sense of realism.

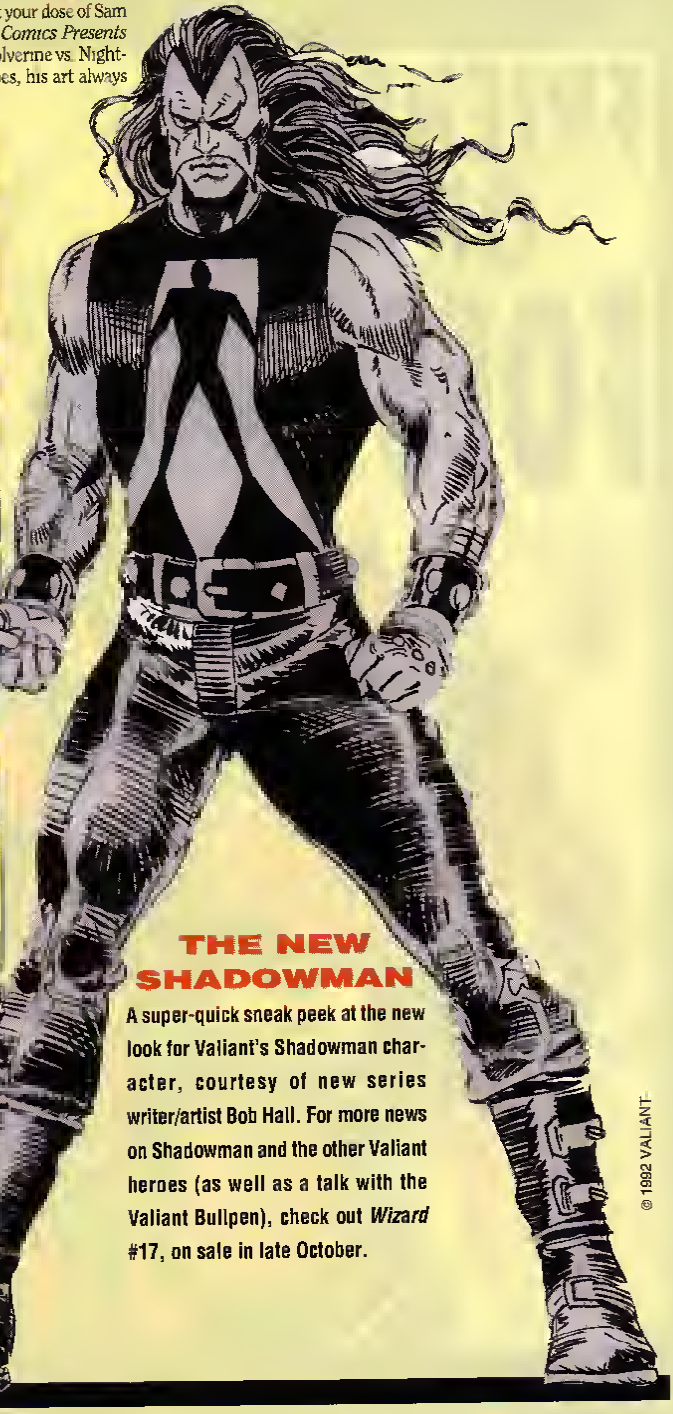
Issue #7, on sale in mid-December, is the first chapter of a new four-part novella entitled "Traumatic Dogs" and follows the nomadic Lusipher's last ditch effort to put up with the city of Palasach, and his reasons for speedy departure.

For more information on *I, Lusipher*, write to Mulehide Graphics, P.O Box 5844, Bellingham, WA. 98227-5844.


FRIENDS OR FOES?
Don't miss this Two-Part War beginning in X-O Manowar #12 & SOLAR, MAN OF THE ATOM #17-- Both parts shipping in October.
VALIANT.

VENOMOUS NIGHTMARES

If you can't wait for *Darker Image* to get your dose of Sam Kieth style action, check out *Marvel Comics Presents* #117-122 for the wicked Venom vs. Wolverine vs. Nightmare brawl. No matter what Kieth does, his art always brings you to the 'Maxx'.



THE NEW SHADOWMAN

A super-quick sneak peek at the new look for Valiant's Shadowman character, courtesy of new series writer/artist Bob Hall. For more news on Shadowman and the other Valiant heroes (as well as a talk with the Valiant Bullpen), check out *Wizard* #17, on sale in late October.

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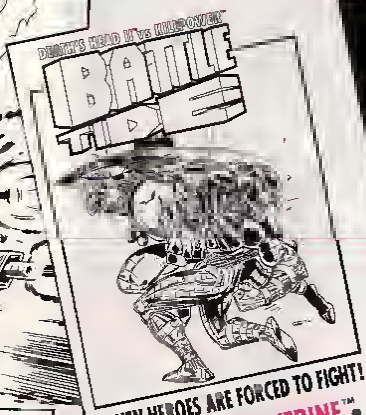

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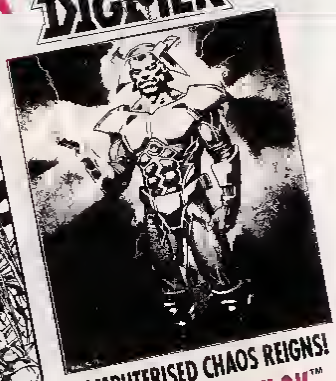

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Collecting Comics In The 90s

By Patrick McCallum

Possibly the most asked question directed to us Wizard people when we attend a comic show is "Why is the Flash on the cover of *Wizard* #7 in the ads for back issues in your book? The one I got had X-O Manowar on the cover." It's pretty simple. We were still pretty new at this by the time #7 rolled around, and we were thinking of what non-Marvel/DC character to put on the cover, and Valiant came to mind. We kicked around all sorts of ideas, and after much deliberation (me and Gareb sitting around for like an hour saying "Magnus?" Nah. "Solar?" Nah.), and suddenly (as if by magic), a Fed Ex package arrived from Valiant, and thinking it full of neat back issues, we ripped that bugger open only to find something much better, a Barry Windsor-Smith original cover for Wizard of none other than that new kid on the block (well, then anyway), X-O Manowar. Very impressive— so Gareb and I stopped burning much- needed brain cells and had the Windsor-Smith cover colored and mounted for a cover. But as deadlines crept closer, something hit us like a bag of wet tribbles. Not only is X-O a new kid on the block, he's a *very* new kid in that his comic isn't even out yet. On top of that, we learned that Valiant wasn't sold on the newsstand, pretty much insuring that comic fans that picked us up on the newsstands would know X-O Zilch-o. So, as a mild panic set in, the decision was made to have an alternate cover on the newsstand, and that's where our good buddy Bart Sears came in. Being an all around good guy, Bart set us up with a kickin' Flash cover, and boom, *Wizard* #7 had two different covers, one for the direct market (X-O), and one for the newsstand (Flash).

As a quick side note, at first we considered doing this on a monthly basis, and even had an alternate newsstand cover set up for #8, a Bart Sears Superman (which is really cool), but we decided that it may look as if we're trying to get people to buy two of our books, one of each cover every month, so the idea was canned. As for the Superman, it'll turn up one of these days I'm sure, as well as the other "shelved" covers that almost saw the light of day.

We're also bombarded with questions concerning the mysterious Grey Hulk cover to *Wizard* #6. Does it exist? Is it a hoax or an imaginary tale? Nah. It's just a little stunt we pulled with retailers, sort of a "gotcha" type of thing. For every ten copies of *Wizard* ordered, retailers would received nine Green Hulk versions and one limited edition Grey Hulk version (of which under 7,000 exist). We polybagged them by the ten's so nobody would know and, by the time the word spread, it was too late for anyone to hog them all. Our way of making people stand up and take notice of our little magazine. So, there you have it, the two great mysteries of Wizard Press laid bare, and we didn't even need Leonard Nimoy to go "in search of" them. ■

DEVIL DINOSAUR ™ & © 1992 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

PALMER'S PICKS

With the comic-book market currently fixated on first issues and special gimmicks, it is increasingly difficult for a self-published artist to cement a firm place among the big companies. After fairly large orders on a first issue of a small-press title, sales of later issues usually drop significantly to a level at which it becomes harder to keep doing. One must either drop out or hold on and do whatever it takes to keep going. Martin Wagner is one of the few who have been able to self-publish and make a place for himself and his comic book, *Hepcats*.

Hepcats began as a daily newspaper strip in the University of Texas campus paper, *The Daily Texan*. The strip ran from 1987 to about 1989 and contained the day-to-day adventures of a cast of anthropomorphic animal characters that Wagner had experimented with in previous high-school and college strips. During the run of the *Hepcats* strip, Wagner decided to try his hand at self-publishing. His first venture was a collection of most of the strips from *The Daily Texan*, entitled *Yo*. The book was printed on a friend's printing press and was hand-assembled. Most of the copies were sold locally, but Wagner continued to self-publish after the *Hepcats* strip ended by starting a comic book that would feature all new stories with the same cast of characters.

The first issue of *Hepcats* went over fairly well for a small-press black-and-white comic, allowing Wagner to continue publishing. But what is considered to be a high circulation for a self-published book was barely enough for Wagner to keep his company, Double Diamond Press, going. Despite the odds, Wagner was determined to keep going with some unique methods.

First, he submitted a single page to Dave Sim's bi-weekly reprints of *Cerebus*, which allowed him to be exposed to the large audience that follows the aardvark. In addition, Sim later invited Wagner to assemble a special preview in the regular monthly *Cerebus* comic, displaying *Hepcats* to an even larger group of comics fans.

But the method that boosted Wagner's cash flow the most was a "Save Hepcats" fund-raiser. Wagner proposed a number of items that readers could buy to keep *Hepcats* alive. The campaign consisted of subscriptions, t-shirts, a sweatshirt, a cloisonne pin, and color sketches for either $25 or $40 (depending on the number of characters). With the money these items raised, Wagner was able to pay off some debts and continue publishing. Although there is no regular schedule for *Hepcats*, Wagner is able to produce and publish about two or three issues a year, and he hopes to increase this number to five.

The comic has a wide audience, as it appeals to both funny-animal fans and to those who don't follow the genre. The characters' anthropomorphism has nothing to do with their lives or personalities. They are never referred to by their animal names (except in certain puns in names like Joey McLyon) and they don't act the way their animal counterparts would. Wagner chose to make his characters animals because he finds that it is easier to convey emotions and body language through animal faces. In addition, the reader is able to identify with the characters more, and they don't carry any stereotypes when judging what the characters do. They are able to easily place themselves in the character's position because his characters are not designed to reflect any specific race or type of person.

Another factor that helps readers relate to the cast of *Hepcats* is Wag-

© MARTIN WAGNER

"Martin Wagner is one of the few who have been able to self-publish and make a place for himself and his comic book, *Hepcats*."

ner's realistic art style. The subtle background elements and the small details of the figures are painstakingly rendered to produce the illusion of animal-like characters in a real-life setting. An admiration for the art of *Little Nemo* artist Windsor McKay and *Akira* creator Katsuhiro Otomo can be seen in Wagner's affection for background detail. Working in black-and-white, Wagner is able to produce a wide range of tones and shading through the use of zipatone and various cross hatching techniques.

Aside from being an accomplished artist, Wagner is an excellent (if not better) writer. His dialogue is crisp, true-to-life, and versatile, allowing him to convey both warmth and humor in the conversations between his characters. In his first real comic-book novel, *Snowblind* (running from #3 to #20), Wagner has been able to keep readers captivated with the mysterious details of the past life of Erica (one of the main characters).

Wagner has blended several real-life stories that either he, or a friend, experienced, to form a plot full of twists and turns that keep the reader guessing.

Hepcats has the potential to gain more readers due to the increased attention it has received recently. Aside from critical praise from numerous professionals and various magazines, Wagner has broadened his horizons with his success at the Capital City and Diamond sales conferences this past summer. Double Diamond was accompanied by Dave Sim's Aardvark-Vanaheim at both sales conferences, and by Collen Doran's Aria Press at the Diamond seminar. All three drew large crowds, indicating that this joining of forces among self publishers should keep getting them the attention they deserve. ■

Recommended Reading

Hepcats is published just about whenever Martin Wagner can afford to (which should be about five times a year) by Double Diamond Press. Copies of the first ten issues, except for #6 and #7, can be ordered from Double Diamond Press, 9300 Northgate Blvd, #116 Austin, TX 78758-6105 for $3.25 each. Subscriptions can also be bought for the following rates: 6 issues - $13.50, 9 issues - $20.25, 15 issues - $33.75.

Double Diamond also publishes Sam Hurt's *Eyebeam*, which collects comic strips from *The Daily Texan*. Four issues have been published, and new issues appear on a quarterly schedule. A set of the first four can be bought for $15, and a six-issue subscription can be ordered for $14.95 from Double Diamond at the above address.

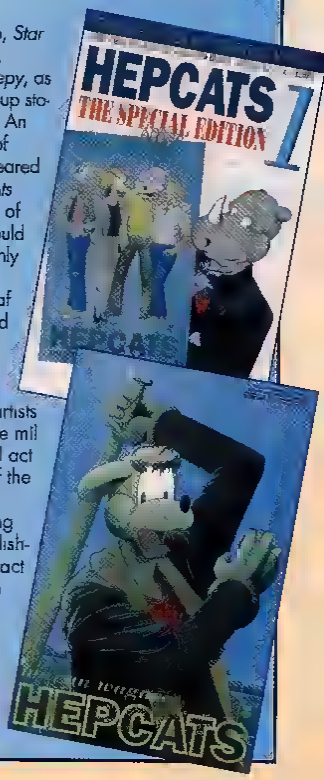
There is also a whole group of new self-published artists with material out. They include the following.

Bone is published by Jeff Smith's Cartoon Books. Seven issues have appeared so far. *Bone* is a light-hearted black-and-white, fantasy adventure comic that has been recommended by such big-names as Will Eisner, Dave Sim, Stan Sakai, and Peter David.

A Distant Soil is published by Colleen Doran's Aria Press. Colleen is well-known for her work on *Sandman* and Anne Rice's *The Master of Rampling Gate*. *A Distant Soil* is a black-and-white fantasy comic published bi-monthly. An eight-issue subscription is available for $12.50 from Aria Press 12638-28 Jefferson Ave, Suite 173, Newport News, VA 23602-4316.

Nestrobber is published by Jo Duffy and Maya Sakamoto from Blue Sky Blue. Sakamoto is a popular Japanese artist, and Jo Duffy is known for her work on such comics as *Akira*, *Star Wars*, *Fallen Angels*, *Wolverine*, and *Creepy*, as well as various back-up stories in *A Distant Soil*. An eight-page preview of *Nestrobber* has appeared in *Dark Horse Presents* #67, and new issues of the regular series should appear on a bi-monthly schedule.

Peter Laird, half of the team that created the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, has started a fund to help self-published artists. Laird contributed one million dollars, and will act as the sole trustee of the foundation. Anyone interested in receiving aid for their self-publishing venture can contact the Xeric Foundation at Suite 214, 315 Pleasant St., Northampton, MA 01060 for a brochure and application.



HEPCATS™ & © 1992 MARTIN WAGNER

WRITING AT THE EDGE

PHOTO: AL ORTEGA

By David Quinn

Collaboration is alchemy, turning ordinary material into gold— and it's also like wrestling on Jell-O, your legs tied to your partner's arms. What I'm saying is, the rules of the game never stop changing— and when you're doing it right, you're a mess. But you can get to places you usually can't get to alone.

Every public appearance I make, though, someone's asking, "How does it work? How do you get from an idea to the finished book?" The urge to respond glibly, "An ounce of pissed-off at the world and a pound of coffee," comes up, but you guys weed through all that same old stuff out there to find the odd, dangerous little books I do. Now I promised the ghost of William Faulkner I'd never try to explain what my stories "meant" to readers too lazy to register their own thoughts and feelings (Think I'm kidding? I'm not getting paid enough to make stuff up), but I never promised I wouldn't have a bash at explaining how. Never had to define this until right now, but I seem to work in three basic ways.

The first, writing whole-cloth for an artist to interpret later. That's common, and not very different from the way I have always written— in fact, an approach for which I actually have training. (Where? Amherst College, National Theatre Institute, City University of New York, and Off-off Broadway. How long? Twelve years from my first produced play to yesterday's proposal for *Wet Metal Suites*. Writers, don't underestimate your studies in Literature—and unless you're an assistant editor at Marvel Comics, don't give up your day job.)

By the second pattern, I write complete scripts, but based on characters and story concepts created mutually with an illustrating co-conspirator. You've guessed by now that the third, and hardest to define, is total-jamming. That is, after co-creating, and often loosely co-plotting, with my partner, I write a detailed script, and he or she does the visuals, with both of us watching—metaphorically, at least— over each other's shoulders.

My notion of "writing for interpretation" is pretty easy to understand; you might have heard this termed "full-script" writing. This would be a great way to work if I hated, feared or simply didn't want to bother with another creator. All you No Exit fans may remember that hell can be other people; it can be quicker to write everything alone, so explicitly that my illustrator— also alone— never needs me.

When I direct my own writing for actors, I often wish the writer were dead.

How has it worked? Well, continue the theatrical allusion. I wrote This Year's Girl, a comedy about two sisters breaking into the glamorous murder biznesss, as a script for actors— basically a hundred-odd pages of dialogue, with the settings and character actions indicated as necessary. Mark Nevelow, creator of DC's Piranha Press, encouraged me to re-write it as one of those three-issue, prestige-format graphic things, introducing me to illustrator Brian Stelfreeze. Much as it hurts to admit it, editors really know their stuff sometimes; Brian's style has the slickness of fashion illustration but, under that, raw power— and more than a little emotional danger. Perfect for the razor-edged irony of lines as coy as "Cold blooded murder is one thing, but lying is quite another!" but real enough to handle two sisters coming face to face with each other and discovering they're each living—and killing—to have what they think the other is feeling.

Stelfreeze said, "Smooth, man." He found the script had just the drama he found missing in most comics— whatever that is— and set out to paint it. To get the right feel, we established a pattern of Brian preparing detailed page layouts. Everything he needed was in the script, but he was free to change the page breaks to fit his pacing— and I was free to request any changes at the level of the layout, from fine-tuning of facial expression to re-working of the panel layout.

I've only had him drive him crazy on one thing, which you might find interesting.

At the climax of the first book, one of our women goes through a sudden, very visceral release of all her sexual and emotional tension— a violent moment simultaneously alluring and repulsive, for Patty and the reader. I hammered at my partner to make Patty look like she was feeling that sexual release and— here's the tricky part— not posing as a "sexy woman."

An inventor crony of mine likes to say, "Fish don't know they're wet." Think about it for a second. You'll break out of the mental lock, too. Americans in the age of MTV, mutant pin-up comics, and advertising culture are so flooded with images of babes on display, it took three conversations— a re-painted panel for each phone call— to make the distinction that this woman isn't showing, she's feeling! This ain't no Justice League blow-up girl, kids, this woman's being! For all the ribbing this bastard writer gives him in public, Stelfreeze won my respect forever when he realized he didn't know he was wet. He got Patty's moment. Read the story someday; you'll see why I fought for it, and we both won. You've been enjoying his freeze-frame covers? Wait 'til you see what he does when he sinks his teeth into a story. (Hurry up, Brian, or I'll railroad spike your other hand to the drawing board, too.) ■

RIP SNORTING, COSMOS SPANNING, ONGOING TITLES FROM

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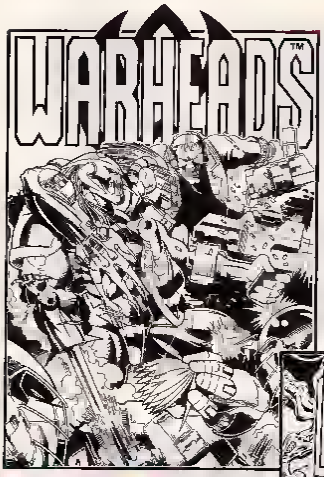

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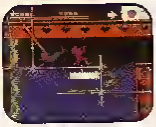

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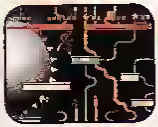
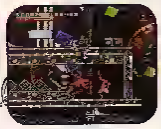
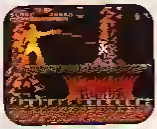


OUTRUN THE RELENTLESS OOOMBALL



STOP JUGGERNAUT'S RAMPAGE



BLAST MASTER MOLO WITH OPTIC BEAMS

ALSO ON GAME GEAR™!

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AT THE Controls

Glenn Rubenstein

Hey! Welcome once again to At The Controls, the inside scoop to the videogame industry. Since this is a magazine primarily about comics, I thought this would be a good time to talk about comics and their appearance in other computer medias.

Ever since I can remember, comic books have been turned into videogames. From the days of the Atari 2600 and really bad Spider-Man games, to my Apple IIE and so-so Incredible Hulk text with graphics adventures, to Batman on my Sega Genesis.

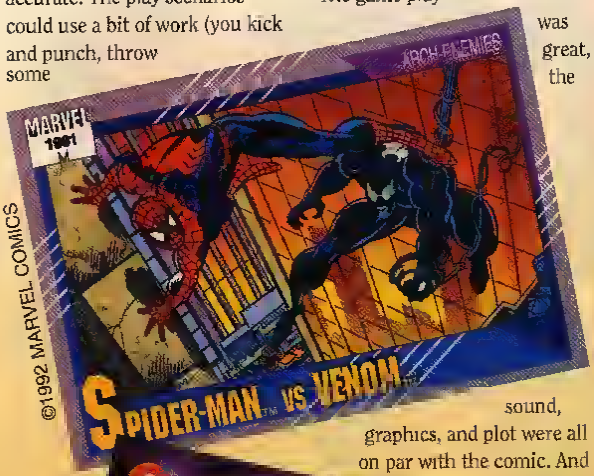
On paper, comics sound like they'd make great videogames. Think of it this way; There are established characters, a handful of storylines to choose from, and the graphic style is already there. What more could a video game designer ask for? Well, this theory has spawned some outstanding videogames based on comics. Let's look at the better ones.

Spider-Man ($54.95 for the Sega Genesis, Sega). The storyline here is great—you have to battle the Kingpin and a handful of foes (including Electro, Sandman, and the Lizard) to rescue Mary Jane. The graphics and sound also add up, giving it a comic-book feel. But the best aspect is the play control. We've all wanted to swing on Spidey's webs, and this game gives us a chance to. It's a bit hard at times, but really cool. Overall: A+

Punisher ($44.95 for the NES and Gameboy LJN). Not much on storyline here,just shoot every bad guy they throw at you. There is a nice Punisher-sized arsenel of weapons at your disposal, as well as a great behind-the-back view which lets you easily shoot down everything in sight. Fans of the comic book may be a bit dissapointed that the storyline isn't too deep, but the carnage is great. Overall:B+

Batman ($49.95 for

the Sega Genesis, NES, and Gameboy, Sunsoft). Based on the hit movie, the storyline is totally accurate. The play scenarios could use a bit of work (you kick and punch, throw some



©1992 MARVEL COMICS

batarangs, and get to drive the Baymobile and fly the Batwing). Graphics are decent, still pretty fun. Overall: B

Captain America and the Avengers ($54.95 for the Sega Genesis, Data East). Definitely this was the best comic book-adapted game ever (just edging out Konami's *X-Men*). The game play was great, the sound, graphics, and plot were all on par with the comic. And guess what? All of those great aspects are here in the Sega Genesis version. Only problem is the game is a bit too short. Overall. B+

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Now those were just a few of the better videogames based on comics. There have also been some awful games based on comics, a short run-down includes *X-Men* (LJN for the NES), *Superman* on the NES, *Spider-Man* on Gameboy.

NEWS

SEGA CD UPDATE

Now it looks like Sega CD will be released sometime in November, not October as previously thought. But the good news is there will be a $400 software value pack-in, and a handful of innovative titles out for the launch, including *Sewer Shark* and *Night-trap* (which use full-motion video), plus the Make Your Own Music Video CD which lets you construct your own music video and has songs from real artists.

MIDWAY'S MORTAL KOMBAT

Street Fighter II fans can find something new in the arcades now, thanks to Williams, who made *Smash TV*. *Mortal Kombat* has *Pit Fighter* style graphics with *Street Fighter II* moves. Pick from one of seven opponents and go head-to-head in a grisly slaughter sport. This game is not for the weak-hearted, but those brave enough to give it a try can find *Mortal Kombat* in their local arcades.

SONIC 2SDAY

It's official. Sega has declared Tuesday, November 24th, *Sonic 2sday*, the day when *Sonic The Hedgehog 2* is released. Not only will this be an event because the game is so great, but it is also monumental because the game will be released on this date everywhere worldwide. Look for a review next month.

As far as future videogames based on comics go, you can expect to see *X-Men* for the Genesis by Sega, as well as *X-Men* games for the SNES by Konami and Acclaim, a *Predator vs. Aliens* game for the SNES, an *Ex-mutants* game for the Genesis by Sage's creation, and *Superman* for the Genesis by Sunsoft. I'll keep you up to date on these as they get closer to release.

Now for comic fans who own personal computers, don't worry. There are already a handful of games out there on the IBM PC format, including *Captain America* and *X-Men*. Modem owners out there have even more to rejoice about. America Online has a great comic-book forum where hundreds of comic fans discuss everything from rumors to the latest storylines. To get to the comics forum, sign onto America Online, click lifestyles and interests, then click Science Fiction and Fantasy, then click on the comics board. For information about getting America Online, call 1-800-227-6364. I can be reached online under ATCMedia.

There is also a Comics Forum on CompuServe Information Service, populated by many professional artists and writers, such as Peter David and Walt Simonson. *And* a Comics Roudtable on GEnie, the net sponsered by General Electric. *Wizard* editor Pat O'Neill is a member of both the C/S and GEnie groups.

So that about wraps things up for this month. Luckily, as of next month, the Christmas season is almost over. Let's rejoice! But for those still looking for a great game, there are a lot out there, and plenty of good games for all the different systems. If I had to pick a system, I'd probably go with the Sega Genesis, but the SNES isn't far behind. We'll just see how things progress in the months to come. In the meantime, in between time, keep gaming! ■

GAME REVIEWS

BART'S NIGHTMARE

(Acclaim for SNES)

Bart's Nightmare is a six-level romp through Bart's head. There are many different levels, each involving separate play controls. It's great to play and also has a high replay value. It can get difficult at times, but it is, on the whole, a very well-rounded game. Overall: A+

R.B.I BASEBALL 4

(Tengen for Genesis)

R.B.I 4 is currently the best baseball action on the market today. Real players with real 1991 stats add a very realistic feel. The Home Run Derby contest is just one of the many features that make R.B.I 4 a hit. Electronics Arts' EASN have their work cut out for them. Can they beat *R.B.I 4*? Overall: A.

MAGICSWORD

(Capcom for SNES)

Try to make it to the top of the tower to destroy the Blackorb. This game has 50 levels of arcade-quality action. It is a good game, but it gets tiring after about two plays. It's major flaw is that *Magicsword* is very easy. It can be finished the second time it is played. Overall: C

OLYMPIC GOLD

(U.S. Gold for Genesis)

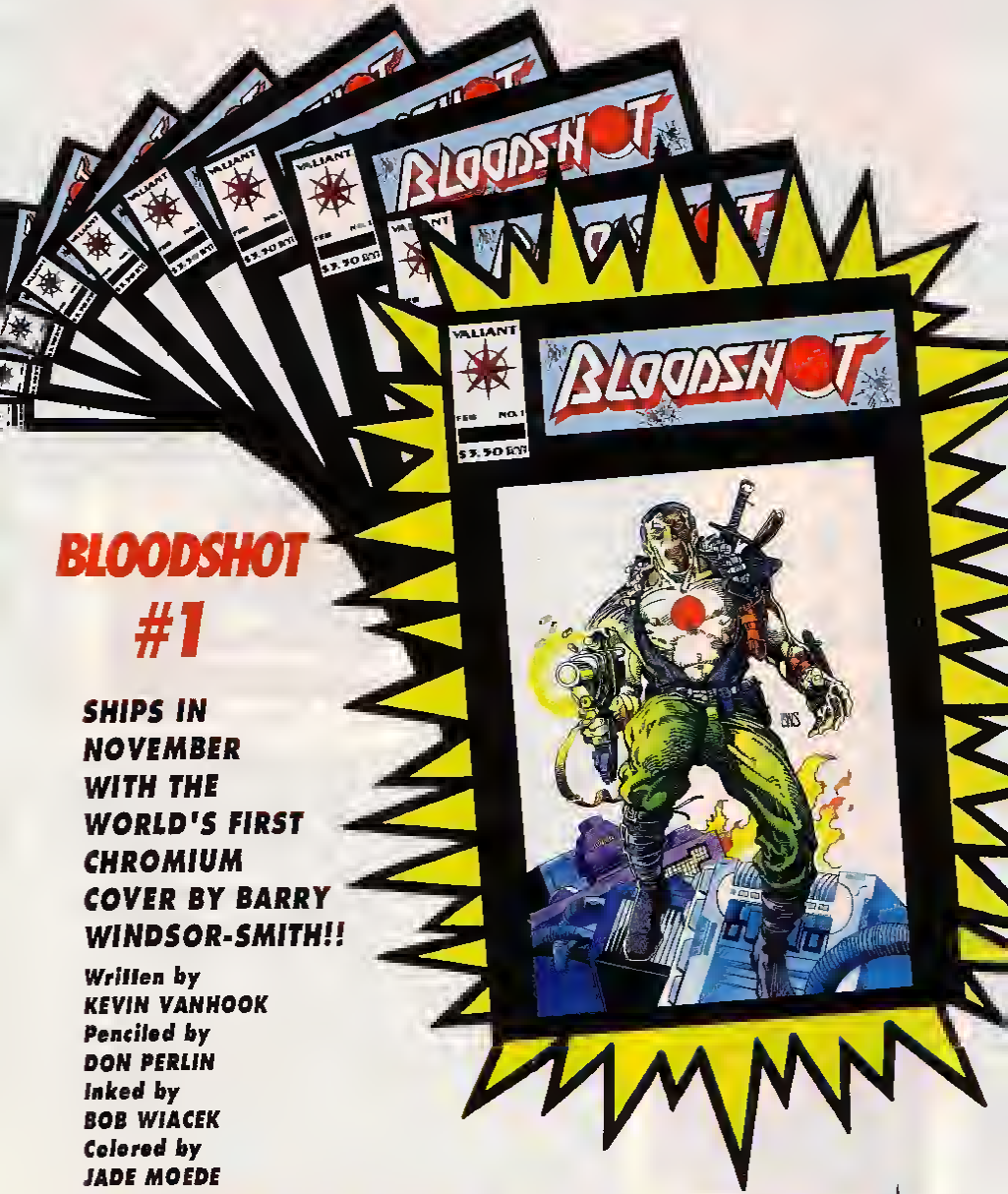
Olympic Gold has seven Olympic-quality events for one to four players. Olympic Gold has great graphics and animation, but the gameplay is lacking in some points, due to button pressing. That's a problem with most track-and-field games. Definitely a game for turbo controllers. Overall: B-

BIO-HAZARD BATTLE

(Sega for Genesis)

Bio-hazard Battle is basically a standard shooter. It doesn't really have any spercial features. It is reminiscent of *Insector-X*, an old shooter also for the Sega Genesis. It has fast action, but it doesn't break any new ground. Sega will have to do better than this to keep Super Nintendo off thier back. Overall: D+

BEING A HERO GOT IN HIS BLOOD--LITERALLY!



BLOODSHOT #1

SHIPS IN NOVEMBER WITH THE WORLD'S FIRST CHROMIUM COVER BY BARRY WINDSOR-SMITH!!

Written by
KEVIN VANHOOK
Penciled by
DON PERLIN
Inked by
BOB WIACEK
Colored by
JADE MOEDE

VALIANT™

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16-Bit POWER

by Craig Cornell

Thunder Spirits

GRAPHICS

SOUND

CHALLENGE

CONTROL

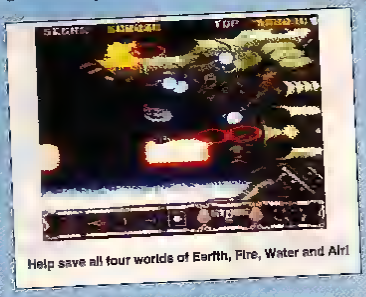
FUN

OVERALL QUALITY

In comparison to the Genesis version, I'd give its overall rating two Roccos and *TFIII* four because it was released over a year ago and was much superior

Greetings Gamers. Welcome once again to 16-Bit Power. The Wizard's guide to 16-Bit games. Where you get the facts with a dash of opinion, not the other way around. I hope you like what goes on here, but if not, let me know. Or if you have a hint for a game or are stuck for some advice on a game, drop me a line. Send it to Rocco's Rebuttals, Wizard Press, 100 Red Schoolhouse Rd., Bldg B-1, Chestnut Ridge, NY 10977. We'll have Dr. Rocco take a look at it. Games are rated using the Rocco ratings system. 1 Rocco is roadkill, 5 Roccos is rare (but good). 1/2 Roccos begin after 1 whole and 3 is dead average. The categories are control (how well your character responds to your controller), challenge, fun (or lack thereof), graphics, sound, overall quality. Get it? Got it? Good.

Thunder Spirits is first out of the gate. A side scrolling shoot 'em up space game with an interesting name and an interesting past. It is the same as *Thunder Force III* for the Genesis system. On the package I saw no indication of this, and the sample screens on the back cover are sufficiently different to fool the unwary. It looks cool, sounds cool on the back side of the box, but after I reached the first boss there was no mistaking it. The Gargoyle is the same first boss as in the Genesis game. Then after the realization hit me, I noticed just how similar this game was. In fact it's the same game! At present I have not been able to get in touch with Seika, the game makers. But I would love to hear the excuse for changing the name of a game and releasing it on another system. If you're like me and have both systems, you could wind up with both games. What a waste!



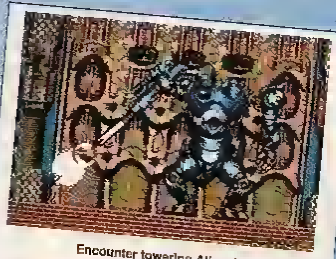
Help save all four worlds of Earth, Fire, Water and Air!

You control a ship with the mission of destroying a computer attempting to destroy four worlds. Each has a theme: fire, water, air, and earth. Controlling your craft is basic but requires a little quickness to maneuver your ship and configure your weapons. You can switch weapons and change the speed of your ship throughout the game. There are some really neat weapons such as the hunter. Lots of energy balls come out

Destroy the evil computer complex!

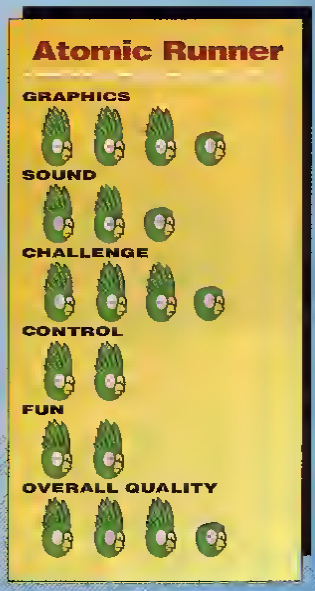
and head for any enemy on the screen. A cool thing to see. [The difference in this department is the lack of the voices when you get a new weapon. In *TFIII* your gunner announced the new weapon]. The challenge is all hand/eye co-ordination--getting around obstacles and avoiding enemies and their fire [basically, no different from *TFIII*]. The fun factor is basically your taste. If you like side-scrolling shooters, this is an excellent choice. There are some noteworthy bosses and some cool effects that are must-sees. Graphics for the most part are not up to Super-NES par and, as I hope game manufacturers will soon realize, you can't survive by putting out below standard games when there are such dazzling creations as *Street Fighter II* and *CastleVania IV* and the public has tasted how good these games can be. The graphics don't stink, they just could be better. There is way too much slowdown, and a distinct lack of parallax scrolling--maybe two layers but room for more. [The graphics aren't as sharp or as well put together as in *TFIII*. Somethings are grainy and hard to see. The animation is also choppy, the parallax inferior and, most of all, a *lot* of slowdown on the S-NES version where there was almost none on the Genesis game. With too many enemies on the screen, it flickers and moving things crawl along--definitely not 16bit material.] The sound effects are average, period. Overall quality is decent. As it stands, a fun shooter with some bugs in it. Sort of like the beginning games for the NES--good but not utilizing their potential. [Unfortunately compared to the Genesis version, this one falls far behind. If I can find out what happened during the translation, you folks'll be the third to know.]

Atomic Runner is the Genesis game that caught my eye this month. It's by Data East. The background graphics are incredible. And the game looks cool. On the back of the box that is. (A common problem for us game shoppers. Great pictures on the back, but those are the only four screens in the whole game worth keeping your eyes open for!) Once I started playing I was dumbfounded. What happened? In this game you are an atomic super-suited guy attempting to save the world from aliens (Ho Hum). The running suit gives you some standard powers--you can shoot various weapons, run faster, jump higher, that sort of thing. The one unusual ability is its running ability. Unfortunately, this is translated into a game where the screen never stops moving. Your character can stop, the screens

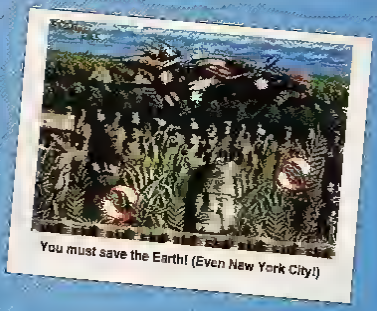


Encounter towering Aliens!

won't. I found this really unpleasant. Coupled with the fact that my character was this itty thing that I could hardly see, and I have a 30 inch TV! (He measured about 3 inches.) The head monsters are pretty good at times. The control is difficult, it's hard to jump and time your shots when the damn screen won't stop! Challenge, you betcha! Still haven't finished this one, and I really don't care. The box says "advanced game play to challenge the most seasoned player." The challenge for me was keeping from getting frustrated long enough to



finish it. The fun is there, but you have to dig. I'm sure some people would enjoy this abnormal playing environment, but some things are necessary in any game to make it fun. It must be user-friendly, have good graphics, cool characters, simple to learn basics. The graphics in this cart are great in the background at points, especially the Statue of Liberty. But the attackers are plain and weird, and the hero is too small and uninteresting, so who do you root for? Sound effects are forgettable but tolerable. And finally, the overall quality is a smidge above average for this genre (side-scrolling shooters). The backgrounds are the carrying force here. The rest is backseat. ■



You must save the Earth! (Even New York City!)

THE BRAT PACK

Welcome aboard another edition of the Brat Pack, where every month Wizard speaks to a group of young comic collectors to see what the fans have to say. This month we'll speak to Craig Jarren, Kyle Mandel and Frank Ginner of Spring Valley, NY and see what they have to say. This month we're going to talk about what they read, or don't read outside the world of comics.

Wizard: Craig, what comics do you read?

Craig: I buy a whole bunch of comics, but I only read a couple. I read *Hulk*, *Amazing Spider-Man* and the *Superman* titles, y'know, like *Man of Steel* and stuff.

Kyle: I read the mutant books, except *Excalibur*. And I read *Lobo* once in awhile. Like Craig, I buy a lot more than I read.

Frank: Me too, but I read most of them. I read all the *Spider-Man* and mutant books; *Excalibur*, too. I also read all the *Superman* books and *Batman* once in a while too.

Wizard: Let me touch upon something really quick here. All of you said that you buy more comics than you read. Why is that you still buy the ones you don't read, shouldn't you--

Frank: I don't want to cut you off or anything, but let me make a real quick point. When stamp collectors buy stamps and don't mail them out, no one freaks out. When coin collectors buy a coin and don't use it for bus fare, no one busts a gut. When comic collectors buy comics that they don't really follow, people like you freak out. If you don't want to buy something, don't. I use my money to buy whatever I want for whatever reason, and if you have a problem with that, then it's just that, your problem.

Wizard: Touchy subject...

Frank: No, it's not meant like that, it's just that some people think they have the right to tell people what they can or cannot enjoy.

Wizard: Ok, you've made your point. What I want to get into is what you guys read outside of comics. Frank, might as well start off with you.

Frank: Well, I read a lot of fantasy stuff, y'know, like D&D type of things. Some of the books were the first two *Dragonlance* trilogies, the first two *Dark Elf* trilogies, and I'm now working on *The Legacy*, a new fantasy hardcover by R.A. Salvatore. I also read some Stephen King stuff, like *It* and *Salem's Lot*.

Kyle: Most of the reading I do is for the reading projects in school. It's not that I don't like reading, it's just that... I don't know, I really can't get into just a book.

Craig: Aside from all the *Calvin and Hobbes* books, I read all of Stephen King's stuff. I tried Clive Barker's stuff, but that's really weird. I don't like it.

Wizard: Well, Kyle said he doesn't do much reading outside of comics but, Craig and Frank, what makes you get into books?

Craig: I don't know, I just like cool stories. One of my friends lent me his copy of *Pet Semetary* and I thought it was great, so I started reading more and more of King's stuff. I like horror books because I love the feeling you get when you read a really good one. They really scare you. Movies and TV shows that are supposed to be scary just suck nowadays. I've tried reading other stuff, like some fantasy and science fiction stuff, but I really like the horror.

Frank: I've read a bunch of cool books aside from the D&D stuff, like some *Star Trek* and Stephen King novels, and there's a lot of good stuff out there. Comics are neat, they have cool characters with cool art and stuff, but books tell a bigger and better story. With some writers like Tracy Hickman and Margaret Weiss of *Dragonlance*, or Stephen King, you don't need art to go with the stories. They show you the pictures with words. Comic fans should try some of the other options out there besides just reading comics. Too many of my friends read a lot of comics and nothing else. ■

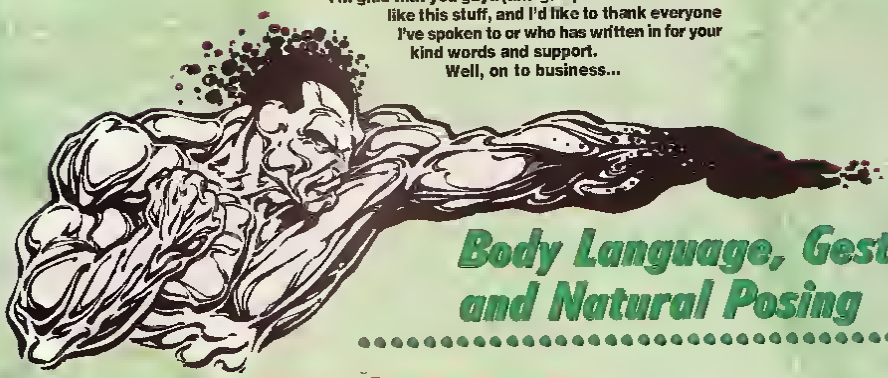
BRUTES & BABES

DRAWING POWERFUL COMICS WITH

BART SEARS

Yes, I'm back again...it's time for another Brutes and Babes. As of this writing, I've started to get feedback from the first few articles that have come out. I'm glad that you guys (and gals) out there seem to like this stuff, and I'd like to thank everyone I've spoken to or who has written in for your kind words and support.

Well, on to business...

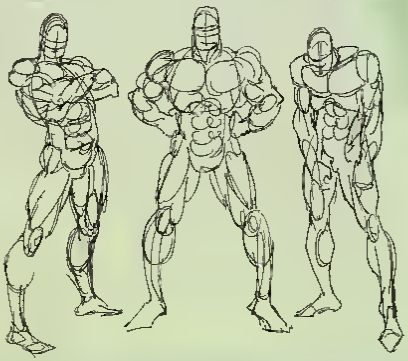


Body Language, Gesture and Natural Posing

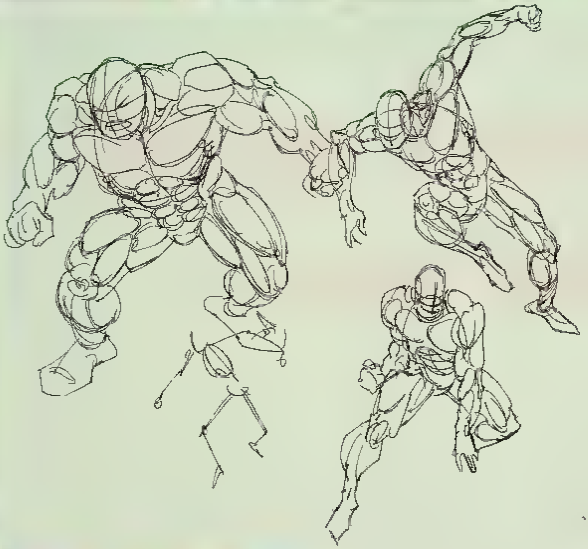
Body Language

Each person male or female, heroic or non-heroic, that you draw, will have a consistent way of moving that is unique to that individual As an example, Superman stands, sits, walks and flies in a much different manner from Guy Gardner. Keep in mind a character's personality, even when they are doing mundane ordinary things. Always remember, the more time and thought you put into each figure that you draw, the more believable and dynamically real he will appear to your readers

There are always several things to keep in mind when drawing characters on your comic pages You have to remember the personality of the character, what he's doing and why (to picture his mental state, which should show through in your drawing), and what's been done to him (is his arm broken, is he bleeding, dizzy, dirty, wet, etc) showing the physical state the character is in.



The body language of a character can be determined by his size and shape of a character, i.e., a large, bulky character would probably be ponderous and slow-moving, wasting no muscular figure would probably be more graceful, faster moving, and less hindered by gravity that his larger friend This is not to say that all large characters are or even should be slow and clumsy, but I just want you to be aware of what you are drawing, and stay consistent



Gesture

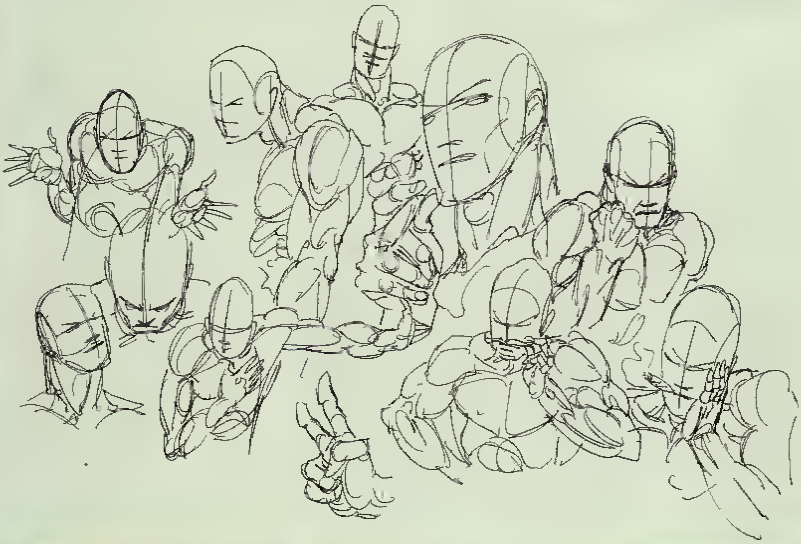
Some people talk with their hands, some always seem to threaten with their fists or intimidate with their heads thrust forward, some turn their head when listening, some always play with their hair, etc , etc , etc All of these are gestures and there are hundreds more Just as each individual has a different way of walking and moving, each has differing expressions and small body movements when he talks or smiles or argues. Or even just sits still He might widdle his thumbs, chew a cigar, twirl his glasses, play with his mustache, or whatever The trick is to find something right for your character(s) and to keep having them do it. They might only do it when they're nervous or scared or angry, but keep letting them do it...and remember nobody else will do it the same way, nor should they

Natural Posing

When we draw someone, say, Spider-Man swinging over the Big Apple on his webbing, we don't assume that he stopped and positioned himself just right so that he would look cool no, we have just frozen an exciting moment of a superhuman athletic genius in action Even when a figure is just standing around, he should look as if he's breathing, Everybody is always moving Did you ever see somebody stand Perfectly still (excepting perhaps, the guards at Bukingham Palace)? Figures must appear fluid, that is to say, all of their parts must work in unison For instance, when someone throws a punch in comics, his whole body follows the action and movement of the first and has no choice but to react fluidly with it

'Cool" poses may look good, but to me they interupt the 'flow" of the story Think about it in the middle of a massive battle, his teammates getting beaten to death around him, Joe Hero stops and calmly stands, looking cool, pointing one heroic finger at Supervillian saying cooly-"You're Dead, Villian...", while death rays and hammer-like villian things pound his body into a useless, bloody pulp You can do the same thing but while Joe Hero's saying "You're Dead, Villian!" he can be slamming hammer-like villian things into death rays flighting his way to Supervillian

Maybe this isn't the best example, but I hope you catch my drift



Paying attention? Lets see what you can do! Send your stuff to:

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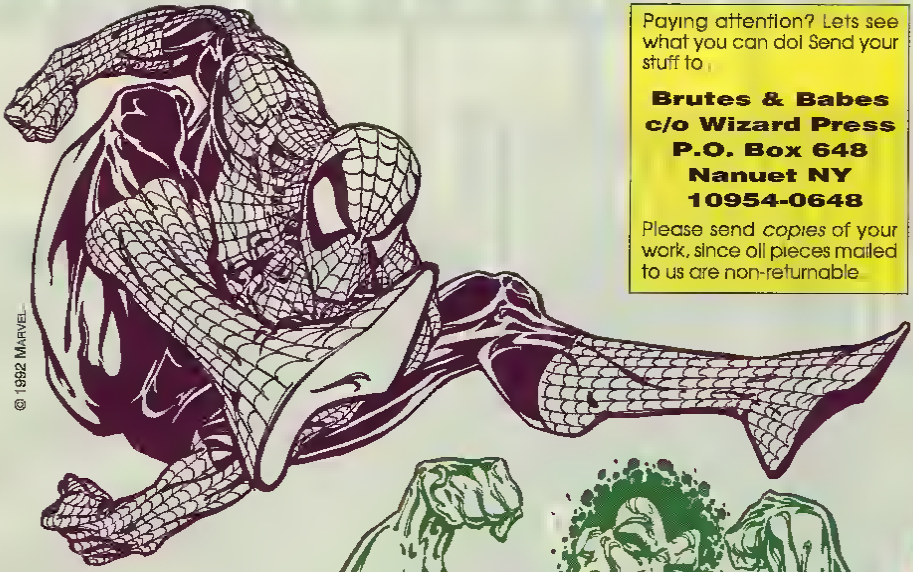
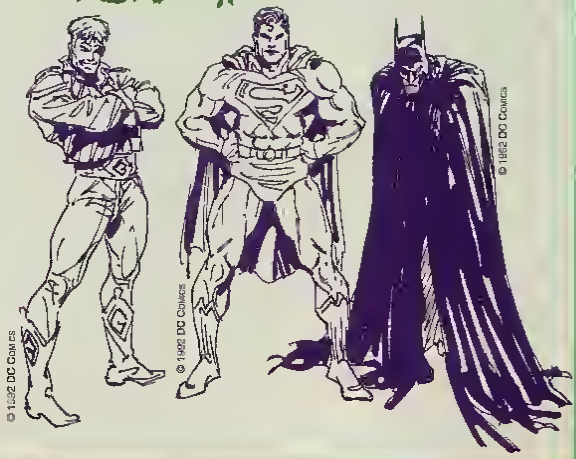


Tips

If there are any of you out there with your hearts set on becoming artists, comic-book or otherwise, then Will Eisner's *Comics And Sequential Art* is a must. Eisner has long been considered a master of comic art and this book is easily the most informative work on the art form to date.

When you first look at it, don't be disappointed because the X-Men aren't jumping around anywhere in the book. If you want a comic, buy one. But, on the other hand, if you want to draw and you want to be good, you'll like this book. Read it, and when you're done, read it again. Read it whenever you're bored... and draw, trying to apply concepts the book talks about, and read it again. I guarantee, if you try and you have talent, *Comics And Sequential Art* will start to make a lot of sense and become a valuable handbook that you will treasure. The book can be purchased from Kitchen Sink Press, No. 2 Swamp Road, Princeton WI, 54968 (or call 1-800-365-7465).

That wraps it up for today. I think I'm going to go re-re-re-re-read *Comics And Sequential Art*, now that you've started me thinking about it again. Thanks, Mr. Eisner, my hat's off to you. ■



Good to see you back at Hollywood Heroes, the best place in the publishing world to get the latest in genre news about upcoming films and television shows. The fall TV season has just started here at Hollywood Heroes central, and the news is hot and heavy, so lets get right to it!

I promised a look behind the scenes of the hilarious new CBS series, *Bob*, this issue, but that's going to be shuttled over into the next month, due to the large volume of news. Be sure to catch the very funny show every Friday night, and look for the *Bob/Mad Dog* Comic from Marvel early next year! I promise next issue, I will tell you all about my set visit.

TV NEWS

This January will be a hot one for science fiction and comic fans. Warner Brothers is premiering its syndicated *Kung Fu: The Legend Continues*, and the science-fictioner *Time Trax*, on January 20th. Meanwhile, Paramount will also launch its two new syndies, *The Untouchables* (17 episodes with Bill Forsythe as lead villain Scareface) and *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine*!

The cast has been named for *Deep Space Nine*, and as I predicted several months ago, Colm Meaney as Chief Operations Officer Miles O'Brien and Michelle Forbes as Ensign Ro Laren reprise their *Next Generation* roles as regulars on that show. Avery Brooks (*Spenser For Hire*) plays Starfleet Commander Benjamin Sisko, Rene Auberjonois (*Benson*) plays the shape-shifting security officer, Odo, and Nana Visitor (*Working Girl*) plays First Officer Major Kira Nerys. London stage actor Siddig El Fadil plays Doctor Julian Bashir, while Terry Farrell, Cirroc Lofton, and Armin Shimerman also star. Although the names are a mouthful, practice saying them because they'll become the newest Trekkie idols soon enough.

Warner Brothers has also started filming *Babylon 5*, a two-hour science-fiction pilot for airing during the February sweeps weeks.

This month in Fox's *X-Men* cartoon, watch for Wolverine to face down Sabretooth in the wilds of Canada in "Cold Vengeance". Professor X sends Storm, Gambit, and Jubilee to Genosha for vacation in "Slave Land", only to discover the horrifying truth. Then, "The Unstoppable Juggernaut" breaks into the X-Mansion, but it's newcomer Colossus who gets blamed for the damage.

HBO's *Tales from The Crypt*, renewed for 13 more episodes, will begin production towards the beginning of 1993, for summer airing.

New Line Cinema and Nelvana are developing a syndicated animated cartoon series taking off their upcoming *Surf Warriors* film, and a Sega game is also on the way.

Flash star John Wesley Shipp has returned to his soap and stage roots. He's appearing on the ABC daytime soap, *All My Children*, as wife-beater Carter Jones. He's also appearing in the Tony Award-winning Broadway play, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, during the evening, after taping is finished. Meanwhile, *Flash* alumnus Alex Desert ("Julio Mendez") has scrambled over to Fox's *The Heights* show, where he plays a member of a struggling rock band.

The Simpsons are having a bunch of guest voices on the air this new season, including *Batman*'s Adam West, *Brenda Starr*'s Brooke Shields, Johnny Carson, *Playboy*'s Hugh Hefner, *Star Trek*'s Leonard Nimoy, Sara Gilbert, Bob Hope, *Batman Returns*' Danny Devito, and singers Linda Ronstadt and Tom Jones (who will serenade Marge). Elizabeth Taylor will be Baby Maggie's voice in the first episode she speaks in, at Christmas. Meanwhile, Marge gets a job at the nuclear plant and Homer has a heart attack.

The Flintstones: I Yabba Do is a two-hour special from Hanna Barbera, airing on ABC in February It features, at long last, the wedding of Pebbles and Bamm Bamm! A second special, later in '93, will feature Pebbles giving birth to twins

On Delta Burke's new fall series on ABC, *Delta*, her character waitresses at a restaurant called the Green Lantern Hmmmm Where'd they get that name?

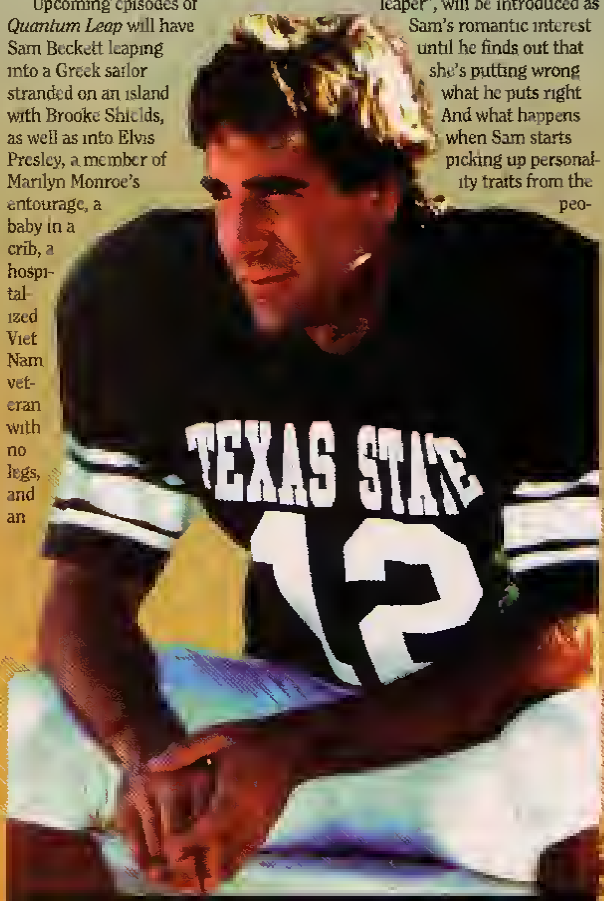
Fox's *Batman: The Animated Series* looks fantastic, and both kids and adults are loving it! With great ratings and a wonderfully diverse audience, Fox and Warner are already talking about the future. What's in it? The only definite plan is for a 90-minute *B:TAS* direct to video film, similar to the *Tiny Toons How I Spent My Summer Vacation* Warner released last spring By the way, listen for original Batman Adam West to vocalize an upcoming character on *Batman: TAS*. Which one? We're not telling

After the success of *The Raven*, a summer replacement that became popular enough to make the fall schedule, CBS has another mid-season replacement show warming up, but this time it's in the cold of space. *Space Raiders* is being prepped by co producers Scott Brazil, Pen Deschman, Richard B. Lewis, and John Watson Those latter three also produced *Robin Hood Prince of Thieves*.

Amblin TV and Universal have committed to do 22 episodes of *Sea Quest*, a science fiction series set in the 21st Century The series may air on NBC, or it may go into first-run syndication

Bill Bixby, star of *The Incredible Hulk* (where he cut his direction teeth on the *Hulk* telefilms) is directing most of the new episodes of teen-show *Blossom*.

Upcoming episodes of *Quantum Leap* will have Sam Beckett leaping into a Greek sailor stranded on an island with Brooke Shields, as well as into Elvis Presley, a member of Marilyn Monroe's entourage, a baby in a crib, a hospitalized Viet Nam veteran with no legs, and an animated cartoon character! A new continuing character, a female "evil leaper", will be introduced as Sam's romantic interest until he finds out that she's putting wrong what he puts right And what happens when Sam starts picking up personality traits from the peo-



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Upcoming episodes of Quantum Leap will have Sam leaping into Elvis Presley, a baby in a crib, and an animated cartoon character!

ple he leaps into?

The season will end its filming in Orlando, Florida, at the *Quantum Leap* convention February 17-19th, where fans can actually watch the show being shot! The hope is that the 1992-93 season will end with the "Sam leaps into *Magnum P.I.*" show originally planned for this season. That show was delayed due to Tom Selleck's schedule and filming costs in Hawaii.

The syndicated *Darkman* series dropped by Fox may now end up at NBC, if interest is maintained.

Tim Burton and Steven Spielberg's *The Family Dog* may finally make it onto CBS airwaves, after over two years of animation problems and glitches. Canadian-based Nelvana is supposed to deliver the series to CBS in October. No airdates have been announced.

SuperForce and *Tarzan* will not be back later this year, and have not been picked up for any more episodes. The two genre shows lasted two seasons and one season, respectively. The syndicated *Lightning Force* has been renewed for another 26 episodes, though it's also on shaky ground.

ABC's *Dinosaurs* is in the works for a big screen feature film, set for a late 1993 release.

The Cartoon Network is airing episodes of the 1960s *Fantastic Four*, *Thundarr*, *Johnny Quest*, *Birdman & Galaxy Trio*, *Centurions*, and the long forgotten *The Thing*! If your cable station isn't carrying it, call and ask them, "Why not?"

Fans of the Sci-Fi Channel will soon be able to see the entire run of *Bionic Woman*, *Invisible Man*, and many other super-hero shows, though *Incredible Hulk* and *Powers of Matthew Star* led off the premiere months of the network. By the way, for everyone asking, Sci-Fi Representatives tell me that when possible, all shows are shown uncut, as they originally aired!

FEATURE FILMS

Jurassic Park, Steven Spielberg's major new dinosaur film for Universal, got a few scares of its own when the hurricane Iniki threatened to destroy the sets on Kauai, Hawaii. The cast was flown back to LA, with the final days of Hawaiian filming delayed until some time in the future. Richard Attenborough (the tycoon who runs the park), Sam Neill (a paleontologist), Laura Dern (Neill's lover and co-worker), and Jeff Goldblum (a mathematician) star in this adaption of Michael Crichton's best-selling novel, in which an American bioengineering company recreates the great dinosaurs of the Jurassic period for a theme park. In reality, it's Stan Winston, Industrial Light & Magic, and several other companies who've been working for 18 months creating live-action dinosaurs!

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Waiting for a new live-action Dr. Stronge flick? Don't hold your breath...

Annie and the Castle of Terror is the big-budget non-musical sequel to the 1982 film *Annie*. A Columbia picture, Lewis Gilbert directs in Prague this coming March. The late start is due to the lead actor's hiatus from his TV show. Who might that be? None other than Patrick Stewart will play Daddy Warbucks in the film! In the story, it's the eve of World War II and Annie and Daddy Warbucks journey through Eastern Europe in search of a military secret that could change the war efforts in a major way.

Speaking of the war, *Barefoot Gen*, an animated feature based on Keiji Nakazawa's comic-book series, is opening in art houses across the country. Tara Releasing has the film, directed by Masaki Mori, and produced by Nakazawa.

Dark Horse Entertainment's film deal with Largo Entertainment is heating up. Larry Wilson and Paul Chadwick have finished the *Concrete* script, while Wilson and Caroline Thompson are doing their original *Organic Future* with DHE. *Kings In Disguise*, based on the Kitchen Sink and later Dark Horse series, is also on tap, along with *Time Cop*, written by Mark Verheiden and produced by Sam Raimi. This latter one is a time-travel love story about a man who journeys to the past to have a second chance with his wife and ends up with a plot to change history!

In other Dark Horse news, *The American* has gone into turnaround from Silver Pictures, and DHE is looking to pick the rights back up for sale. New Line Cinema, who has *The Mask*, has put the film on their 1994 schedule, to be directed by Chuck Russell. It's currently being rewritten again. New Liners say that the concept is great, but the scripts haven't been.

I saw some footage of Ridley Scott's animated adaption of Moebius' *Starwatcher* at the San Diego Comic Con, and it looked incredible. All computer-animated, the Columbia film is being directed by Moebius and Keith Ingham.

The horror film that wouldn't die, *Army of Darkness: Evil Dead III*, will finally be released in 1993. The Sam Raimi film stars Bruce Campbell, returning as Ash. Dark Horse will produce the comic-book adaption.

Don Bluth's animated *A Troll In Central Park* is finished and will be released next summer, but the long time animator's company recently declared bankruptcy. This leaves his next films, *Thumbelina* (which is 90 percent done) and *The Pebble and the Penguin* (with Tim Curry, June Foray, and Martin Short doing the voices) without production, until

someone puts up enough money to finish them.

A second Roger Rabbit film, *Who Discovered Roger Rabbit?*, has apparently been killed by Disney executives. However, a new cartoon short, "Trail Mix-up," is now being animated. Meanwhile, Disney is working on animated films including *Aladdin* (this fall and it looks fantastic!), *King of the Jungle (1993,* with songs by Elton John and Tim Rice), *Sinbad Tales* (1994), *Nightmare Before Christmas* (Tim Burton in 1994), *Pocahontas* (1995), *Swan Lake, Silly Hillbillies On Mars, Song of the Sea,* and *Fantasia Continued.*

Comic writer Cary Bates, who's revising *Superman: The New Movie* for filming in early 1993, was a writer on *Christopher Columbus: The Discovery*, also an Alexander and Ilya Salkind production. Recently, Bates told me that the Salkinds plan to move ahead on Superman this fall, though the title may be changed to reflect more of the *Batman Returns* feeling. The script features Superman's battle against Brainiac and the Kryptonian city of Kandor does figure into the plot (through whether it's in a bottle has not been revealed). Bates says that "this is a new version of Brainiac, which incorporates elements of both the old and new versions."

Superman: The New Movie will also have references to the previous four films, though the producers wish to put much distance between this and *Superman IV*. That includes replacing the entire cast. Chris Reeve may be the only returning cast member, and even that has not been decided yet. Filming may take place in Florida, but it may also film abroad. Bates notes that since the first film, "Technology has vastly improved. We'll make full use of the rises in technology over the last 15 years, as well as all the flying tricks we learned on *Superboy's* four years of production." For any fans awaiting the Boy of Steel's return, Bates says there are no further plans for *Superboy*, and that probably none of the series cast members will appear in the new film.

Andrew Lloyd Webber is causing problems in Hollywood again. His issues with directors have left the big screen *Phantom of the Opera* (at Warner) without a helmer, and his dissatisfaction with the animation designs on Steven Spielberg's version of *Cats* led to the firing of the entire team! Webber's been "knighted" with the title of "Sir Difficult" by insiders.

A seventh *Star Trek* film is being bandied about at Paramount, though not until 1994, and with the cast of *Star Trek: The Next Generation* leading the Enterprise through space.

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...check out Full Moon's *Doctor Mordrid* instead— now on video!

Rachael Talaly, who directed *Freddy's Dead*, is working on an MGM film adapting the British comic anti-heroine, *Tank Girl*! Meanwhile, Stuart Gordon, who's been championing the now-dead *Iron Man* film at Universal, plans to direct *Fortress*, a futuristic prison picture starring Christopher Lambert, for Fox.

Francis Ford Coppola is set to reproduce his second major monster film. From a script by Jim Hart (who also adapted *Bram Stoker's Dracula*), Joel Schumacher will direct *Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*. Rumors are that Coppola will also produce a third film, to make a trilogy, with *The Invisible Man* following the other two.

Bob Hoskins and John Leguizamo are the *Super Mario Brothers* in Buena Vista/Disney's film, currently shooting in North Carolina. They play Mario and Luigi, respectively. Samantha Manthis plays the princess, while Dennis Hopper is bad guy King Koopa. Ricky Morton and Annabel Jankel (*Max Headroom*) are directing the film, which tells the story of how the Brothers became a video game. It's due out this Christmas, just in time for merchandising sales!

800 Leagues Down the Amazon is a new Roger Corman film now shooting under the direction of Luis Llosa. "Based on" Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, the cast includes Barry Bostwick, Daphne Zuniga, and Adam Baldwin.

Dennis The Menace is underway, now filming in Chicago, produced and scripted by teen-meister John Hughes. Nick Castle is directing the star-powered film. The cast includes Walter Matthau as Mister Wilson, Christopher Lloyd, Joan Plowright, and Lea Thompson.

Amblin/Universal's *The Flintstones* film, still being readied for John Goodman, is being written by former *Mork & Mindy* writers Jeff Reno and Ron Osborn. Other TV-to-film features we didn't announce last month include Penny Marshall directing *Sgt. Bilko*, and named *Naked Gun*'s Zucker Brothers directing *Davy Crockett* and *First Knight*, a bizarre version of the King Arthur story.

Producer David Permut is working on a rap version of a classic book *Yo Alice!*, based on *Alice in Wonderland*, is being developed at New Line.

Columbia has optioned *The Men In Black*, from a Malibu mini-series by Lawrence Cunningham. The series, which follows the adventures of Jay and Kay, two tough guys who investigate and eradicate weird disturbances, is being touted as "*Ghostbusters* meet *Lethal Weapon*," and

IT'S THE END OF THE WORLD AS YOU'VE KNOWN IT!
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Columbia is taking a franchise deal for several films. Walter Parkes (*True Believers*, *Awakenings*) is co-producing the film with Laurie McDonald's Aerial Pictures. No screenwriter has yet been set.

No news whatsoever on James Cameron's long-delayed *Spider-Man* project for Carolco.

Mr. Magoo, you've done it again! Or rather, you'll be doing it again. Stephen Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment is producing a Mr. Magoo live-action film for Warner Brothers sometime next year. The near blind, bumbling cartoon star who won an Oscar, and was nominated six times for an Academy Award, will be played by an actor yet to be announced. Bob Hoskins is top choice in Hollywood, though Danny DeVito, Walter Matthau, Christopher Lloyd, and others have also been discussed. Magoo was originally voiced by the late Jim Backus, who readers may remember as Thurston Howell III on *Gilligan's Island*.

Terry and the Pirates is heading towards Paramount, now championed by Bob Reheme and Mace Neufeld (*Patriot Games*). The live-action rights were recently bought from Ben Melnicker and Michael Uslan, whose Batfilm held them for years.

Stephen King's *Needful Things* is almost set to go before the camera. It will be directed by Fraser Heston, from a script by W.D. Richter for New Line Cinema to release late in 1993. The cast includes Ed Harris, Bonnie Bedelia, and Max von Sydow. Odds are that Sydow, a sinister Emperor Ming in the *Flash Gordon* remake of a few years back, will play the satanic Leland Gaunt, proprietor of the Needful Things curiosity shop.

The Limelight Group, which signed a deal with Kevin Eastman to develop Tundra properties, finally has some on the slate. Bob Burden's bizarre *Flaming Carrot* is being developed as a "post modern" film, while Alex Proyas is adapting and directing *The Crow*. Limelight is also producing *Badmen*, an action/comedy written by Larry Bishop, which is soon to be a Tundra comic series. Other upcoming genre projects include *Dial M For Monster* from writer/director Proyas, the revisionist fairy tale *Prince Charming*, and an animatronic *Jungle Book* with Jim Henson Productions. Finally, Scott Rosenberg (from Malibu?) has written an untitled movie that Hollywood insiders are calling "The Stepford Children."

Producer Robert Evans, who is still working on *The Saint* remake, has signed hot-property Sharon Stone for *Silver*, a horror film adapted from Ira Levin's book by John Carpenter in March. The plot concerns a plague ridden Mad Max like society in which a black marketeer must transport a test tube baby with the only untainted blood in the world!

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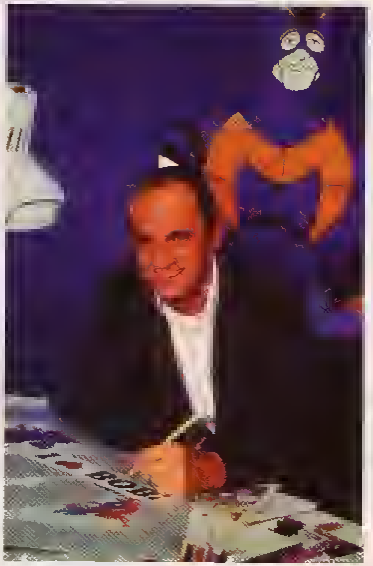


The new CBS comic-based sitcom, *Bob*, is headed your way as a comic courtesy of Marvel.

Joel Silver is producing a live-action *Speed Racer*, to be directed by Richard Donner from a script by Patrick Read Johnson and John Lau. This is in addition to his live *Richie Rich* film, planned with MacCauley Culkin, from a script by Neil Tolkin. The afore-mentioned Johnson was to direct John Hughes' *Dennis The Menace*, but he was replaced at the last minute due to "creative differences" with Hughes.

Watches III, the third film based on Dean R. Koontz's novel, is now being filmed, for probable direct-video release.

Columbia's *Black Panther* film, set to star Wesley Snipes (White Men Can't Jump) as T'Challa, the Wakandan prince, may have to wait past January to start. When he's done with *Rising Sun*, he heads into work on *Skeezers*. After that, he may team with Oscar-nominated director John Singleton (*Boyz N The Hood*) on the Marvel superhero film.

Insiders tell me that Steven Spielberg and Warner's *Plastic Man* is an almost definite go. Larry Wilson scripts, and Brian Spicer (*Parker Lewis Can't Lose*) will direct, with a projected summer '93 release rather than the previously announced Christmas date.

Finally, *Aliens Vs. Predators* will be battling it's way into your theatre screens sometime in 1994, if all goes as planned. With an initial budget of $30 million, the film will be co-produced by Dark Horse Entertainment, Largo Pictures, and 20th Century Fox. A script is now being readied. As always, I'll keep you updated as soon as there is more to reveal!

VIDEO, THEATRE, AND THEME PARKS

Check out the *Body Parts* video for the appearance of a young superhero. Nathaniel Moreau (Billy Jr.) played Alex Powers on the ill-fated never-aired *Power Pack* pilot in 1991.

Watch out for *Trancers III*, new on video from Full moon Entertainment, starring Tim Thomerson of *Dollman*, *Flash*, and *Trancers I and II* fame.

Fans who can't wait for a new Dr. Strange movie will want to conjure up Full Moon/Paramount's just released video *Dr. Mordrid*, which has surprising similarities to Marvel's sorceror, a man destined to defend the Earth from the evil sor

ceror Kabal, played by Brian Thompson. The film is co-directed by Moon founder Charles Band and his father, Albert Band The decent special effects are by David Allen Productions who also worked on *Young Sherlock Holmes* and the *Puppet Master* series As usual, Eternity is doing a *Dr Mordrid* comic book adaption

Off broadway, a play called *Weird Romance* finds a few science fiction love stories on stage. The two one-act musicals are appropriately weird, and the second, "Her Pilgrim Soul", was written by comic book writer/*Batman Animated* producer Alan Brennert!It was previously produced as an episode of the second *Twilight Zone* series

Beautiful stories for Ugly children, a play based on the Pirahna Press comic by Dave Laroupe and Dan Sweetman, was performed at the Los Angeles Theatre Center Complex in August and September No news on whether the play did well, or whether any more productions of it will be mounted. Wayne Coe directed the play

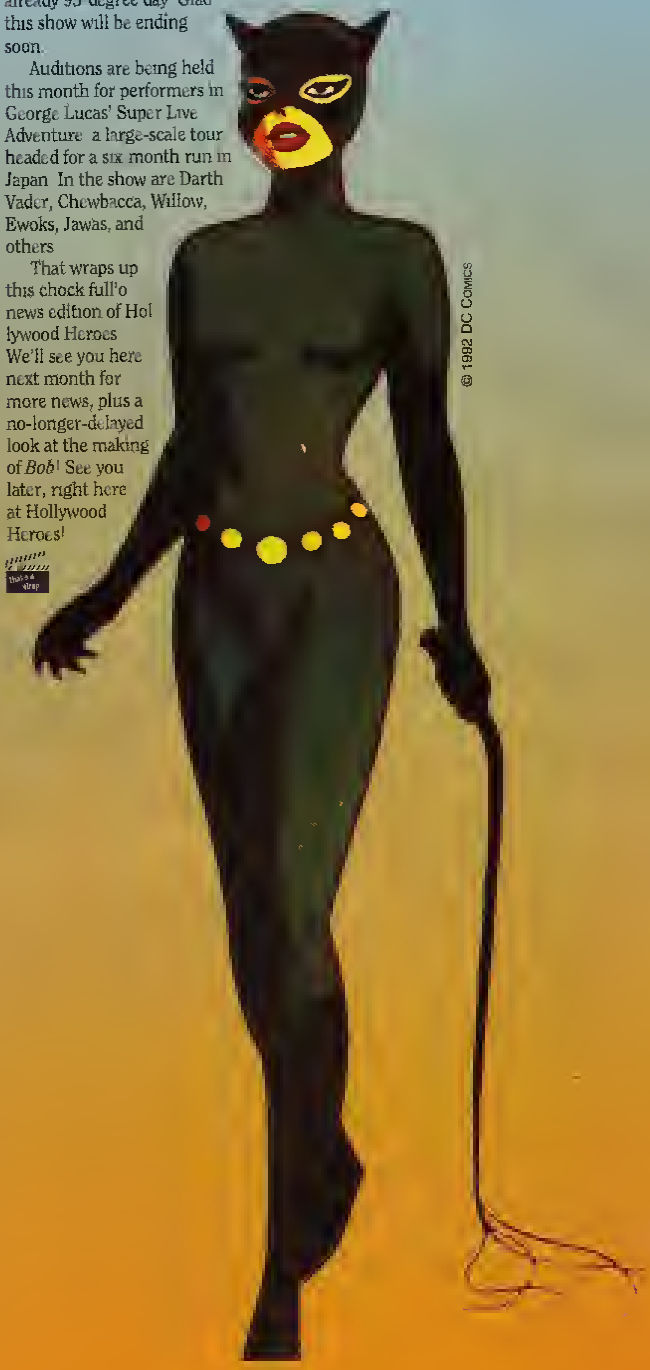
The lovely stage musical, *The Desert Peach*, finally opened November 6th in Seattle Donna Barr, who produces the screamingly funny comic about a gay German officer in World War II, co-wrote the musical with Mike Seyfrit and T. Brian Wagner *The Desert Peach* is a Mystic Fruitcake Production No word as to whether it will tour.

Disneyland is soon to open Mickey's Toon Town, with a Toon Town Trolley, Roger Rabbit's Car toon Spin, and Gadget s Go Coaster. I recently went to Disneyland and was wowed by their spectacular Beauty and the Beast stage show (though I've heard it's not as good in Florida). Nothing I've seen live compares to the tremendous spectacular Fantasmic, which has my top recommendations with lasers, holograms, water-projected animation, live action, fireworks, flaming water, explosions, and a tremendous score. Top honors to Disney for this spectacle to end all spectacles

I also saw the Batman Stunt Show at Magic Mountain and was more impressed with the sets than the show The stunts were really cheesy and repetitive, and the Joker looked tremendously stupid. The only thing to wake me up was the cotton candy I was eating and a few flame explosions that heated up the already 95 degree day Glad this show will be ending soon.

Auditions are being held this month for performers in George Lucas' Super Live Adventure a large-scale tour headed for a six month run in Japan In the show are Darth Vader, Chewbacca, Willow, Ewoks, Jawas, and others

That wraps up this chock full'o news edition of Hollywood Heroes We'll see you here next month for more news, plus a no-longer-delayed look at the making of *Bob*! See you later, right here at Hollywood Heroes!



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THINGS THAT GO BUMP

Artist Kelley Jones seems to have a knack

By Greg McElhatton

"I've always found it hard to follow the tradition of what's already been done," Kelley Jones admits. People who have seen Jones' work will be quick to agree— his art on such projects as *Aliens: Hive*, *Batman/Dracula: Red Rain*, and *Sandman* more than speaks for itself.

"You won't find my first work going for much money," Jones laughs. "I was an inker for Jackson Guice on *Micronauts*. At the time, I wasn't really a penciler. I also wasn't really an inker; I knew how to use the tools, but that was about it. I really wanted to draw like John Byrne or Jim Starlin, but I didn't even come close! I also didn't take the job too seriously, I was more interested in school. It wasn't until around 1986 that I thought I might be able to do it halfway decently."

Jones first hit the spotlight with his work on the *Deadman:Love after Death* mini-series. "*Deadman* was really different to draw, with a great story by Mike Baron. Here was this guy who was incredibly lonely, and I kept asking myself how I could show that in his figure. I finally decided to make him really skinny, like it had taken a toll on him. I mean, what's the point of being all big and muscular if you can't touch anything?"

Kelley Jones is known not only for the horrific stories that he draws, but also for working on projects that are very character-driven. "I really don't relate to the monsters, honest! It's the relationships in things like *Aliens: Hive* that I enjoy so much. When you see Stan wondering if Julie really loves him or if she's just using him, that stuff just draws itself. I try to help the readers relate to the characters, make them know that they've both got things in common. Once the reader starts to understand and know them, the situations they get in are far more frightening."

When the situations are ones like journeying to Hell to claim your true love's soul that you banished there 10,000 years before, Jones really has his work cut out for him. "I didn't really want to do *Sandman* when I was first offered it," Jones reveals. "I was already a fan of the book, and I didn't want to know the nuts and bolts behind it. Finally, Neil Gaiman called and asked me to do an issue, so I agreed. One reason I finally decided to was because it wasn't a big book at the time, and I wanted to give Dream his own visual identity. He doesn't jump around a lot or other superheroish stuff, so I gave him his swirling cloak. He's standing still, but you still get that feeling of movement."

"Another thing I started doing was changing his face slightly from page to page, or slightly altering his outfit. I had decided that in dreams, things always change subtly, and Dream would do the same, appearing different to different people, which Neil had mentioned briefly before. Neil didn't get out of shape over it or anything, he ended up playing off of it instead. I also liked the idea that even if he was in a spotlight, he'd always have a shadowy face. People must have thought that I wasn't competent or something! I didn't want to ape Mike Dringenburg or Sam Kieth, so I made sure to draw him in my own style, not theirs."

Kelley Jones' run on *Sandman* was a runaway

IN THE NIGHT

for the weird and unusual in comics.

[illegible]s, first with two stories in the 'Dream Country' series and then providing most of the art for "Season of Mists." "Of all the stories, the one I've enjoyed the most was the 'Dream of a Thousand Cats' in *Sandman* #18," Jones confides. "It really summed up what Dream is. He's a being that's there for all sentient beings, and Neil really nailed it on that story. Perhaps his best *Sandman* stories are the one-part ones.

"On the other hand, I loved working on 'Season of Mists.' They're collecting it in August, and they're also going to have a limited edition leather bound version, that's designed to look like an old book. Dave McKean's designing it, and I'm really blown away by what I've seen. [illegible]C's marketing 'Season of Mists' as the definitive *Sandman* story, and I'm thrilled about it."

It was Jones' success on Sandman that led him to *Batman/Dracula: Red Rain*. "I couldn't believe it when I went to my first signing for the book— I found out that it had sold out in three days!" Jones exclaims. "I mean, I was expecting to go there and have everyone tell me they weren't going to pay $24.95 on a hardcover graphic novel that wasn't even part of the continuity! To be honest, I don't think DC had much faith in us and didn't expect these sales. Still, as happy as I am to see how well it sold, I still don't like the idea of people buying it and wrapping it up and having it as a collector's item. I still want people to read it, and I was relieved to hear that the softcover will only cost $9.95. The book is 96 pages, basically the same content as two prestige format books, so it's a really good price. What's kind of scary is that not only will there be DC's hardcover and softcover versions but Warner Books is coming out with their own version, and so is the Quality Paperback Book Club! With stuff like this happening, I have to make sure that the collector thing doesn't happen to me. The last thing I want to do is rest on my laurels— but with the workload I've got, I won't be doing that for a while!"

Jones' upcoming workload is one that not many people can match in terms of sheer magnitude. He has two more Batman Elseworld graphic novels in the works written by Doug Moench, a sequel to *Red Rain* and a brand-new one called *Dark Joker*. He'll be drawing another issue of *Sandman* for Neil Gaiman, plus another possible Gaiman collaboration for which the details have not been given. Plus, with a sequel to *Deadman*, a story for *Weird Tales* by Harlan Ellison, and the negotiations with Dark Horse for other projects, it boggles the mind that Jones also has a regular monthly series in the works.

"It's called *Umbra*, and it's about a character that Tom Veitch and I came up with two years ago, a supernatural woman. We wanted to do a more realistic female character, not just a clone of a male one. It mixes the ideas of double standards and things from Hell, and it's a project that I hope can embrace both male and female readerships. DC's very interested in it and some other ideas that Veitch and I have come up with. Tom Veitch is someone I feel like I've already worked with, and I think we're going to have a very good final product." The only question that still remains is when *Umbra* will come out.

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Jones says. "If you asked me a year ago, I would have said it would be out now," he sighs. "DC's reworking the creator contracts for the better, so we're waiting for them to finish it up so we can get cracking. It's kind of funny, because I do a lot of work, but it all comes out in big chunks. *Umbra* will be my big commitment by drawing a monthly series, but I think I'm ready for it."

With all the projects that Jones is working on, people might expect a lot of blood and gore. "Blood and guts and exploding bodies? Nahh! As much fun as it is to draw stuff like that, I want to work on some more serious horror. I don't want it to be too abstract-at the same time, it has to be something that people can relate to. *Deadman* had hammer killings and eviscerated dogs, but the one thing I heard the most about were two ghosts French kissing!" Jones laughs. "In fact, I got just about as many comments about the French kissing scene I did in *Sandman*, where Lucifer kisses that really gross-looking demon. That's the kind of stuff I like to work on, where you see it and stop, because you're used to seeing stuff like that happen in your lives.

"I think that's the whole point of this kind of story, because you want people ten to 15 years later to still get a kick out of it. I'm not here to dismiss them, but sales don't always mean that it's a great story—otherwise, *Rambo* would be one of the all-time great movies! People bring up the scenes like the kisses in *Deadman* and *Sandman* like they had just read them, and that's when I know that I did a good job."

On the other hand, Jones isn't dismissing the occasional dramatic blood-and-gore scene. "*Aliens: Hive* is over 100 pages worth of material," he confides. "When you sit down and count it out, there are only maybe five pages of ghastly stuff. The nice thing is, by keeping a tense atmosphere with the lighting and backgrounds, when those gross scenes *do* come up, it's got a great impact. Jerry Prosser sets you up with this story and telegraphs what's going to happen a mile away... and then cries, 'Ha ha, gotcha!' and sidesteps it neatly. The same is true with Neil— both of them keep the reader guessing, and it's lots of fun to draw."

Jones admits that like many artists in the field, he has given some thought to writing comics as well. "It's been very educational working with people like Neil Gaiman, Mike Baron, Doug Moench, people who know what they're really doing. They've shown me how to write a story, and when I do, I want to make sure that mine isn't the one that will be easy to draw, or to write something solely for the public," Jones says. "You need to write the story first, then think of it visually. One idea I've had is to write for another artist first, so I won't fall into the trap of making one a vehicle for the other. Too many people do that, and when it's all said and done, it's not a very satisfying piece of work. The people that really stuck with me were the ones who wrote and drew their own stories back in the '70s, like Jim Starlin. Then again, people like Matt Wagner and Frank Miller also wow me."

With an art style all his own, Jones has made sure that his influences are a bit different from most people's. "Oh, some of my influences are various artists— all the EC Comics guys, Bernie Wrightson, Tim Sale, Vince Giarrano, Greg Irons. The great majority, however, are photographers. My stuff evolved a lot faster when I looked away from comics. I got one of those instant cameras and just went around snapping pictures for reference. This is how I finally stopped being a clone of other artists— rather than look at how other artists had drawn it in the past, I looked at what it looked like in real life."

As strange as his

methods and influences are, Jones has various projects and creators that he looks forward to month after month. "Frank Miller's *Sin City*, Matt Wagner's *Legends of the Dark Knight* arc, Andreas Rorke's stuff in *Cheval Noir*, Sam Kieth's *Wolverine*— heck, anything by Sam Kieth!" Jones laughs. "It's not so much the books that I'll come back to but who's doing it. People like Tim Sale, James Robinson, Andrew Fox. I'm also a sucker for *Ms. Tree Quarterly*; it's very realistically done, it's one of those books I can sit down with a peanut-butter and jelly sandwich and just enjoy.

"It's those kind of people com[illegible] projec[illegible] [illegible]ate to things we know, [illegible]ings we believe. Stories about people when handled by Neil Gaiman and Mike Baron make it worth coming back to them again and again." ■ --

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THE SANDMAN

Master of Dreams

One of DC's hottest titles right now is Sandman, featuring writer Neil Gaiman's wonderful fantasy creation Dream, also called Morpheus and many other names—

one of the Endless, lord of the Dreaming, whence come all dreams and nightmares. It's a series that combines horror and high fantasy, not really a super-hero title at all. *Sandman* #19, "A Midsummer Night's Dream," recently won the prestigious World Fantasy Award for best short story.

In a recent interview, when asked where Dream came from, Neil Gaiman explained that he was just following in the footsteps of his British predecessors at DC Comics by reviving and revamping an obscure DC character from the past, the way Alan Moore remade various old heroes in *Swamp Thing*, and Grant Morrison dredged up Animal Man and B'wana Beast. Gaiman revived the Sandman.

He *did*?

Let's take a look at the record. Sure enough, the Sandman was one of the very earliest DC superheroes— but that Sandman was *nothing at all* like Gaiman's version!

That original Sandman first appeared in the 1939 issue of *New York World's Fair Comics*, a special annual that DC issued for sale at, naturally, the 1939-'40 New York World's Fair. Immediately

by Lawrence Watt-Evans

SANDMAN © 1992 DC Comics

after that, he took up a place as a regular in *Adventure Comics*, starting with #40, the July 1939 issue, and running until the entire *Adventure* line-up was revamped at the beginning of 1946. The last Sandman story was in issue #102.

The Sandman also appeared in *World's Finest Comics* for just a few issues, #3 through #7, in 1941 and 1942.

And, being one of DC's earliest leading superheroes, he was a founding member of the Justice Society of America: he appeared in *All-Star Comics* beginning with #1 (Summer 1940), but gradually faded away, reduced to cameos for his last few issues and disappearing completely as of #21 (Summer 1944).

So he was not only one of the first to appear, in 1939, but he was one of the first major DC characters to fade away— he was gone by the middle of 1946, and not seen again until the various revival of the "Earth-Two" superheroes decades later.

And who *was* the Sandman? Come with me now to the summer of 1939, and we'll see.

He was playboy Wesley Dodds, who entertained himself at night by putting on a green suit, purple cape, orange fedora, and blue-and-gold gas mask, and then roaming the city putting any criminal he came across to sleep with a shot from his gas gun.

Why did he do this? Where'd he get the gas gun and the mask?

Well. . well, in 1939 origin stories weren't really considered essential, you see. None of that was ever explained. The very first origin story for the Sandman appeared in *Secret Origins* #7, dated October 1986, scripted (of course) by Roy Thomas, DC's resident expert on Golden Age superheroes, and I'm afraid I don't really consider that authoritative.

Why was he called the Sandman? That's simple— because the Sandman of legend puts people to sleep, and Wes Dodds put criminals to sleep with his gas gun. The biggest problem with the Roy Thomas origin, in my opinion, is that Thomas gives him the name and gas mask to start with, and then adds the gas gun later, which I think rather subverts the whole concept of the character.

But that's okay, because so did DC. It would appear that despite a costume and approach that would seem to make him stand out from the crowd, the Sandman was not wildly popular. Maybe having a gas gun as his armament was too limiting. At any rate, around the end of 1941 the Sandman got a complete make-over, courtesy of Bob Kane. His black hair turned bleach blond. He traded in his cape, suit, fedora, and gas mask for a standard-issue set of superhero longjohns, in purple and gold. The gas gun was replaced with a "wirepoon gun," suitable for swinging from tall buildings or snagging fleeing getaway cars. A kid side kick by the name of Sandy was added, with a matching outfit— well, almost matching, it was red-and-gold instead of purple-and-gold and reduced the helmet mask to a blue eye-mask like Robin's.

And together, this dynamic duo put criminals to sleep with their fists, instead of a gas gun. The sleep/sand motif turned up on a couple of covers— Sandman and Sandy appearing in a crook's nightmare, or knocking a giant hourglass over onto fleeing gangsters— but basically, they were, like so many other heroes, just two guys in longjohns punching out bad guys.

I suppose that was what the public wanted. And it certainly didn't hurt any when, three issues after the change, a new regular team took over production of the feature for *Adventure*— Joe Simon and Jack Kirby. They stayed for about 20 issues of *Adventure* and did the last two appearances in *World's Finest* and it's those issues that seem to be remembered— Simon & Kirby are often credited with creating the gold-and-purple version, which they did not.

So what does this mildly interesting Golden Age tough guy have to do with Neil Gaiman's haunting creation?

Nothing— directly.

But decades later, in 1973, Joe Simon and Jack Kirby both happened to be working at DC, and Kirby was winding down his "Fourth World" series and had some free time, and somebody came up with the idea of putting together the first new Simon & Kirby story in 20 years.

And the result was *The Sandman* #1, cover dated Winter 1974, edited and drawn by Jack Kirby, scripted by Joe Simon, inked by Mike Royer.

This Sandman was *not* Wes Dodds.

It was Simon and Kirby producing stories about a guy in a gold costume with a sort of kid sidekick, but that was as far as the resemblance went.

This Sandman was the legendary figure who could put people to sleep with his magic sand, who brought dreams to

everyone as they slept.

Except this was the Simon & Kirby version, so the old myth was updated and technologized— this Sandman wore red trunks and a red cape and gold tights and lived in the Dream Dome, surrounded by viewscreens and ejector tubes and lots of incomprehensible machinery. He kept two nightmares, Brute and Glob, as sidekicks— and as prisoners; whenever he didn't actually need their help, they were sealed in big glass tubes

Dreams, it seems, come from the Dream Stream, a fantasy dimension, and the Sandman's job is to monitor all contacts between the Dream Stream and the Reality Stream. This is complicated by Jed, an orphan who has extraordinarily powerful dreams, and by various super-villains and alien invaders who try to use dreams in their evil schemes.

Against these villains, the Sandman wields his sleep-sand and a hypnosonic whistle that can do various tricks (such as freeing Brute and Glob, putting people to sleep, etc.) Glob and Brute, in addition to being scary and strong themselves, carry bags that can unleash an infinite stream of Vile Things.

Very strange stuff.

This appeared on the stands completely without warning and was, according to the text pages, intended as a one-shot; it was, however, fairly successful, and five more issues followed.

Those five were not written by Joe Simon, but by Michael Fleisher; only half of them had Kirby art. Still, they caught the weird, childlike, dreamlike feel of the first quite well, continuing the adventures of Jed and Brute and Glob and the Sandman.

Apparently the idea got old fast, because #6, dated January 1976, was the last.

And except for Roy Thomas' use of the original in occasional Golden Age continuity inserts, that was the end of the Sandman— until Neil Gaiman came along and decided to take the name and concept from the 1970s version and turn it into something new and wonderful.

Gaiman's version begins with the concept of an imprisoned immortal, as he has explained in various places, and as we saw in *Sandman* #1, dated January 1989. To be exact, in 1916 a coven of would-be sorcerers pursuing immortality attempted to entrap Death in a mystic circle.

They captured Dream instead, and held him for 72 years.

And in a masterful piece of retroactive continuity, over the course of the next 16 issues Gaiman explained how, during that 72 years, the universe tried to compensate for Dream's inactivity by inspiring Wesley Dodds to act the part of the Sandman; how Brute and Glob— who are real, but nowhere near as likeable as Simon & Kirby depicted them— created Jed's dreams of a wonderful Sandman in red-and-gold; and how a variety of other DC stories over the years that had involved dreams or sleep all tied together into the background of Dream's captivity.

And in the course of doing that, he's crafted some of the most frightening and wondrous stories ever seen in comic books. And when the background was filled in he went on to new stories, sometimes tying up loose ends from old series (such as Element Girl, in "Facade," in #20), and sometimes

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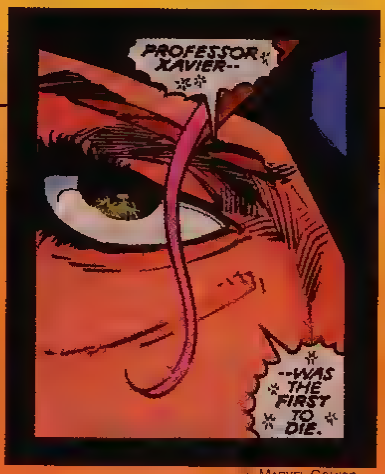
telling stories entirely his own.

Amazing, that a rather boring Golden Age hero in yellow tights could eventually transform into the black-robed Endless and give us tales like these.

But then, anything can happen in dreams.

Lawrence Watt-Evans is the author of various books, stories, and articles in the fields of science fiction, fantasy, horror, movies, comic books, etc. ■

THE X-TRAITOR



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ROUND UP THE USUAL SUSPECTS

by Pat McCallum

For those who read Marvel's Mutant Line of Titles (and the Wizard letters page), one of the questions that must have passed through your mushy grey matter was which of the X-Men will turn traitor sometime in the future and wipe out the other merry mutants?

If you are unfamiliar with this topic and wondering what the hell I'm talking about, let me give you a really condensed version of events in *Uncanny X-Men* #281 and beyond. While in battle with the aforementioned uncanny people, the evil mutant known as Fitzroy was using his mutant power of "Timestepping" (the ability to bring future beings to our time line one-way), and accidently brought in the future X man known as Bishop, stranding him here in our era

At first unable to believe that he was in the past and believing it all to be a trick, Bishop eventually joined the ranks of the legendary X-Men.

This is where Bishop's new found teammates heard of the horrifying future that was in store for them, as Bishop recounted his tale of finding the decimated X-Mansion As part of the story, Bishop went through the rubble and stumbled upon an ancient transmission recording of Jean Grey, all battered and bruised, who, moments before she is murdered by an off-screen attacker, is able to utter those fateful words that have comic fans drooling in anticipation; " ..decimated! Mansion security was deactivated from within! . betrayed by one of our own! ..Professor Xavier was the first to die. Powers negated Our own fault never should have trusted. " To top it off, Bishop also confronted what appeared to be the future self of Gambit, now calling himself LeBeau (his real last name) or simply The Witness, sole survivor of the massacre that claimed the team He was unable to provide Bishop with any substantial clues concerning the Traitor(s)' identity

So, needless to say, this news put a bit of damper on the X-Mens' spirits, and sent comic fans bent on uncovering some clue to the assassin(s)' identity scurrying in every direction, scrutinizing every back issue no matter how loosely connected to a mutant, in hopes of discovering who is responsible.

From the deluge of mail received here at the Wizard H.Q. every month, the majority of the public seems to have narrowed it down to a handful of suspects.

The following is a close look at those accused of possibly turning traitor, as well as my own choice as to who the scum puppy may actually be

Bishop: The future X-Man who was the harbinger of doom for the team may be more than a messenger of bad news, he may actually be the traitor who does in the team. When I first heard the Bishop/traitor theory, I scoffed. "How ridiculous is that?" Could the X-Man who travelled back through time and helped stop a renegade evil mutant turn on the team he so idolized? That's when a letter to this magazine from a fan in East Moline, IL. hit me like a ton of dead mutants. He wrote " Bishop, believing that he is indispensable in efforts for mutantkind.. may idolize the X-People but, when facing the reality as not being what he envisioned them to be, he could come to the conclusion that the X-Men would better serve mutantkind as martyrs.. "

Wow, he s got a pretty good point there When Bishop first confronted the "legendary" X-Men, they didn't exactly live up to his expectations All he knew of the team were glorified exploits that had become the stuff of legend Meeting the real thing was a bit of a letdown. On top of that, they didn't exactly approve of Bishop's

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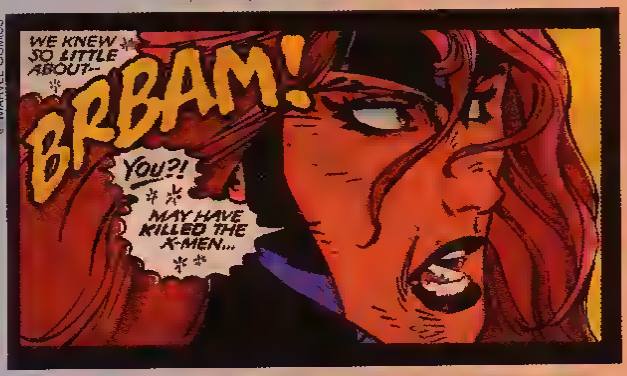
strong-arm tactics, and perhaps the X Men seemed a little weak in the eyes of the take charge Bishop In time, couldn't Bishop come to the conclusion that the team would better serve the mutant cause as martyrs than heroes because they lack the "strength" necessary to face the brutal times ahead And if push came to shove, with his ability to absorb and reuse mutant powers without any damage to himself, combined with his "take no prisoners" attitude, Bishop could do a serious number on the team if need be

Psylocke: The sexiest member of the team may also be the most dangerous member to the team. She is one of the most powerful telepaths on the planet and also has the ability to focus her mental powers into psychic "daggers" projected from her hands, enabling her to disable her opponents with a single blow. So, we've made the point that she is a powerful member of the team, and if need be, capable of putting a serious hurting on the crew if the mood hit her, but what reason would she have for toasting the X-Men? Two reasons, actually During a battle with a villain known as Slaymaster in the days before she joined the X-crew, Psylocke was permanently blinded and retired somewhat from the superhero gig. Later, Psylocke was confronted by Mojo, the villainous other dimensional ruler of Mojoworld, and was given bionic eyes which restored her vision Could there be some hidden programming in those eyes? Might someone from Mojoworld have the ability to control Psylocke like a puppet or maybe even use those bionic eyes as a camera to view the lives of her teammates?

To add even more fuel to the "Ooo... It's Psylocke that offed em!" debate, when the X-Men were "reborn" by going through the siege perilous, Psylocke was taken under the wing of the Mandarin, and was brainwashed into becoming one of his assassins Well, with the help of fellow X-Man Wolverine, Psylocke broke free of the big M's control, but often wondered if she was truly free of his influence. A somewhat confusing action that was turned into a sinister one by a reader in Mission, TX, was Psylocke's teasing of Scott Summers (a.k.a. Cyclops, X-Team leader) On repeated occasions, 'Locke strutted around in front of Scott, and insinuated a possible relationship between the two, all in front of Scott's lover and teammate Jean Grey The fan wrote "could this be a divide and conquer ploy on her part?" Hmm, though it might be reading too much into it, that's a pretty keen observation. Aside from those somewhat shady incidents, Psylocke has given no indication of being the X-Traitor

Gambit: One of the most popular X Men, the Cajun Charmer known as Gambit also seems to attract the most controversy Because it's pretty obvious that Gambit will be the sole survivor of the X-Team (courtesy of Bishop's enlightening tale of the future), most hands point to him and yell "Hey, he's the last one breathing, he must be the murderer!" Well, yes and no. While it is mighty suspicious that ol' Remy is still active and kicking while all his teammates [illegible] it doesn't necessarily mean he's the one who pulled the trigger, so to speak Gambit is an extremely supreme individual, and has been known to get out of more than one tight jam. That, combined with his mutant ability of super charging the stored kinetic energy of an object for explosive results makes him one difficult dude to "off." On the other hand, what little his fellow teammates do know about him isn't very good He used to belong to a major thieves guild in New Orleans and in the past has had very unscrupulous dealings with some very shady characters, among them the murderous villain known as Sabretooth, who, in a recent encounter with Gambit asked since when was he working on the side of the angels or '.. Did I just blow your latest scam?"

Now that's awfully suspicious and with Gambit's ultra-cocky attitude, fans are more than willing to get the nooses ready, but maybe they're a bit premature Even though Gambit has a history of dealing with unscrupulous people and has a bit of a shady past, it's just that — shady So before you all get ready to hang our lil' Cajun buddy, remember that fellow team member Wolverine has a similar past, and we all know he's not the traitor (wait a sec... nah)



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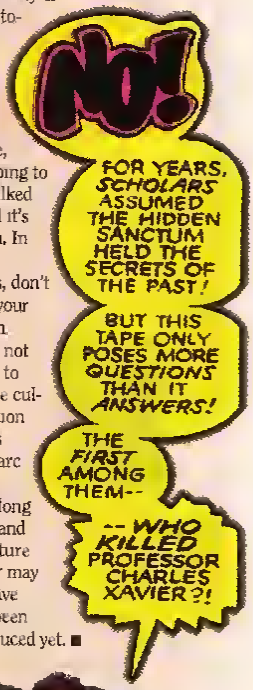
ters with the X Men, Forge had created something called the Neutralizer, which could temporarily erase a Mutant's special powers. (You heard me "Neutralize powers", just like what Jean Grey was saying in that future recording, eh?)

Aside from that rather ominous creation, Forge can construct just about anything he sets his mind to. Y'see, Forge has the ability to invent anything, which makes him one dangerous individual if you get on his wrong side. On top of that, Forge also possesses fantastic mysterious powers, powers the full limitations of which are still unknown. *Verrry* open character for Marvel to play with, and considering how next to nothing is known about his life before he met the X-Men, who knows what murky mysteries are swimming around in his past. And motive? Any fan following recent development in the pages of *The Uncanny X-Men* saw the somewhat unpleasant end of the soap opera like relationship between Forge and teammate Storm, and his departure from the team bringing with him the ex-leader of the Brotherhood of Evil Mutants, Mystique, who was having a severe nervous breakdown. My thinking is that Forge, under the impression that he is spurned by the woman he loves and feeling that he can no longer call the X-Mansion his home, leaves with a strong feeling of resentment. The feeling of loss and rejection will be fueled to a burning hate by the shape-shifting Mystique. With all this background behind him (most of it mysterious), my money's on Forge for toasting the team and going down as the dude who killed (or at least tries to kill) Marvel's top-rated superheroes.

There you have it. From the mail that pours into the offices by the truckload, the four characters profiled are the most anticipated to become the turncoat in the near future. Of course there's a host of other theories as well. The submerged consciousness of the White Queen believed to be in Jean Grey's psyche being some how responsible, or the "evil living wings" of Archangel possessing him and forcing him to commit the act, even that it's Rogue, considering that she's an ex-super villian, has a history of mental problems mostly due to her ability to absorb a body's abilities and memories with a touch, and she's powerful enough to put a serious hurting on the team if need be.

Whoever it is and whatever reason is given, two things are very clear concerning the identity of the traitor. First, in the world of fantasy, anything is possible, so all the hypothetical situations discussed here could very easily become fact or fizzle at an editor's whim, and, considering the popularity of this storyline, it's going to be milked for all it's worth. In other words, don't hold your breath. We're not going to see the culmination of this story arc for a long, long time, and the future traitor may not have even been introduced yet. ■



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BREAKING IN AS A COMIC-BOOK WRITER

A Primer

By Peter David

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The most common question I get at conventions and the most frequent type of letter written to me at Marvel features a variation on the following. (The exact wording is taken from the letter of one young man in Mansfield, Ohio. I'm not running his name because I don't want to violate confidentiality. But it was one of the better written letters I've received on the subject.) And it says:

"I want to be a comic book writer. At the moment, I'm a 16-year-old junior in high school, brimming with ideas. A question that seems to be asked a lot of me is, 'What are you going to do with your life?' and, 'What are you going to be?' To most of them I say that I haven't decided yet. But, to those to whom I tell the truth, that I want to write comic books, they say, 'No, seriously.' That, along with a girl saying that she wants to just be friends, defines the low blow.

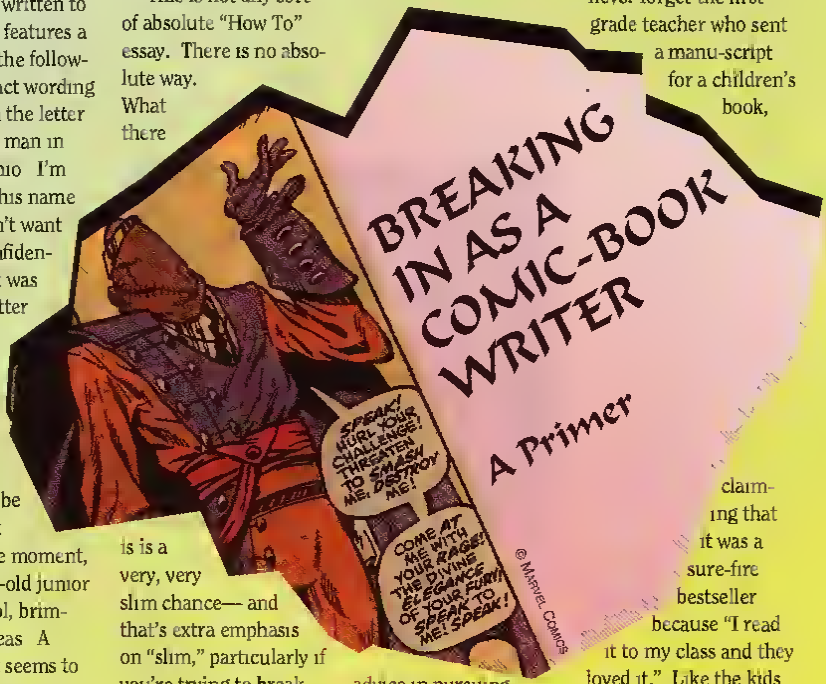
"The reason I'm writing is that I need a little help in knowing just how to get there."

Rather than answer the question over and over again, I figured I'd write up for *Wizard*, make a bunch of copies of it, and send them out whenever I get asked.

This is not any sort of absolute "How To" essay. There is no absolute way. What there is is a very, very slim chance— and that's extra emphasis on "slim," particularly if you're trying to break into one of the Big Two.

Unsurprisingly enough, though, I don't get a lot of people coming up to me and asking me how to break into Valiant or Dark Horse or Image. I'm usually asked about Marvel, and it's usually plot outlines for Marvel characters that I'm shown. So that's what I'll focus on, using my experience as a writer and also my time working for book publishers, as well as my staff time at Marvel.

There are two things to be considered here: the nature of submissions, and to whom (and how) you should submit them. I now give you some very brief, fairly practical advice in pursuing a writing career.



Section One: Nowhere near everything you need to know in order to be a good writer...

Rule 1: Don't listen to friends and family, no matter what they say. They will either tell you that your goals are stupid or unworkable, which won't help your ego. Or they'll tell you that you're a wonderful writer, which they're rarely in a position to do, because their feelings for you cloud their judgment; you, however, will get delusions of grandeur. I'll never forget the first-grade teacher who sent a manu-script for a children's book, claiming that it was a sure-fire bestseller because "I read it to my class and they loved it." Like the kids were really going to shout out, "Boy, Mrs. X, your book really bites it."

Rule 2: Rule 1 is not absolute. If friends or family give you constructive criticism, take it.

Rule 3: Read.

Rule 4: Use a typewriter or computer with a letter-quality printer, 8 1/2 by 11 inches, double spaced, with at least one-inch margins all around (a pica inch is 10 spaces, an elite inch is 12; a vertical inch is six lines). Don't handwrite. Don't write on anything other than standard-weight white bond paper. I don't care what Abe Lincoln or Jack Kerouac wrote on; you're not Lincoln or Kerouac. And for crying out loud, don't use erasable bond. That wasn't a dodge the writer used in Misery to get Annie out of the house; no real writer types on erasable bond.

Rule 5: Use a dictionary. If you've got a computer, use spell check

Rule 6: Read

Rule 7: Include your name and address on all correspondence.

Rule 6: Read.

Rule 9: Note the repeated emphasis on reading. Note that I don't keep saying "write." Many people will tell you that you have to write constantly. To me, telling a fledgling writer, "You should write," is like telling a fledgling auto mechanic, "You should fix cars." It's a given, it's obvious, it's self-evident.

If you want to write, though, you should be reading as wide a variety of things as you can There's no better way to absorb the basics of writing than to see how others are doing it. And for heaven's sake, if you want to write comics, don't just read comics. What will make your stories fresh, vibrant, and, most important, noticeable is bringing techniques and subject matter that you've learned from other writers along with you into the comics world.

The more you distance yourself from outside influences, the more cloudy your vision becomes.

Rule 10: When you get rejected, keep in mind: It's nothing personal. Learn to mentally separate yourself from your work. If someone says, "Your writing is lousy," he's not saying that you are a lousy person.

Rule 11: Learn to type. Learn to type well and learn to type fast. If nothing else, you can pick up temp work to tide you over before those huge royalty checks come rolling in.

Section Two: How to give submissions to comics...

Rather than break this down into rules, I'll break it into questions. Keep in mind that there is nothing official in any of this. I'm not giving you words handed down to me from Marvel or DC management. In fact, future columns may have letters from comics companies stating that I'm completely off-beam. All I can provide is my opinion on how best to proceed.

> THE COMICS BUSINESS NEEDS NEW INFLUENCES, NOT A RECYCLING OF OLD ONES. IT'S LIKE ALL THOSE ARTISTS WHO ONLY LEARN ART FROM COMIC BOOKS, RATHER THAN LEARN HOW TO DRAW FROM LIFE.

Do I have to learn to draw? No. No more than you have to learn to letter or color. Learning to draw does make your work more accessible to the editor, in that it takes much less time to look at a few pages of art than it does to read over and critique a story. But does that make it easier to break in? No, not if the best you can be is a lousy artist.

Go with your strength. If you have a talent for writing and drawing, then by all means, develop both. Obviously, the more things you can do well, the more chances you have at success. If you have no talent for drawing, but know you can write, then focus on your strong point. Why become a lousy penciller, if you have it within you to become a great writer?

Do I submit a whole story? You submit the gist of the story. Your intial submission should, ideally, be no longer than one page. It's not the easiest thing to do, and you'll find that it becomes almost an art form unto itself What you should do is boil your story down to its essence Ask yourself, "What is this story about? What are the themes? What does the charcter have to deal with that makes this story interesting, important, and, most of all, unique to this character? Present the essence, the themes and conflict, and the resolution in the broadest of terms (you don't have to describe every moment in the story. Simply making it clear that you know how it begins and ends is fine).

If your story consists of "Wolverine runs

around, fights guys, and comes up with a neat way to beat a villain," I can guarantee you it won't sell. You need to come up with some new slant, some new perspective, some new vision, that is both consistent with what's gone before and, at the same time, different enough to catch the attention of the person who reads it and make him or her say, "Hey, that's a neat idea. I like that."

I don't care if you've read stories that saw print and weren't about anything. Stories that had no subtext or depth. Stories that had no conflict other than people running around and hitting each other. How many times have you read a story and said, "Hell, I can write better than that"? Well, if you want to break in, you do have to write better than that. Sure it's not fair, but it's true. Besides, you don't want to aspire to mediocrity. Who wants to use the lowest common denominator to justify their work?

I have great ideas for all these new characters. Should I submit them to Marvel? No. Not if your goal is to break into Marvel. If you have a great idea for a three-part story, save it. If you dreamed up a 12-part, star-spanning mega-series that incorporates every hero in the Marvel Universe, don't bother. You have to remember what it is you're trying to do.

So what am I trying to do? You're trying to make yourself useful to an editor.

An editor has one job and one job only: To get the titles he or she edits out the door to the printer. Everything editors do— the phone calls, the meetings, the running around— everything funnels down into that one imperative. And if you come along and seem to be someone who can help them achieve that goal, then you've got a shot at getting on their good side. Not a great shot, mind you. The odds are still long, because editors don't always have time to nurse along would-be writers. But it's a shot, nonetheless.

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU READ A STORY AND SAID, "HELL, I CAN WRITE BETTER THAN THAT"? WELL, IF YOU WANT TO BREAK IN, YOU DO HAVE TO WRITE BETTER THAN THAT.

So do I submit stuff to the editor of a specific comic book? They may kill me for this, but my answer to that would be yes. Official policies may be otherwise but, as I said, I'm not official. And me, the smart-aleck freelancer, I figure, what've you got to lose? If the editor doesn't want to deal with it, he'll kick it over to someone else, anyway.

My reasoning is this: What an editor needs most is inventory material. Stories that do not have an immediate effect on the continuity. Stories that, after 22 pages, will leave the lead character the same as he was at the beginning in terms of his status and relations with the other characters. That way, if the regular team blows a deadline, the editor is prepared with a fill-in story.

The trick is that any good story is about— to some degree— change. Someone in the course of the story should, ideally, go through some sort of change. Something should happen to him wherein, at the end of a story, he views the world a little differently than when he began. So either the lead character (a super-hero, presumably) has to have an experience that makes him think differently about something when the adventure is over, or else you have to create some new character to interact with the super-hero so that, by the end of the story, the new character is different than when he began.

It's very difficult. It's not impossible. And when it's done well, it can be extremely memorable. Roger Stern's "The Kid Who Collected Spider-Man," for example, could easily have been a fill-in story, since it filled all those basic requirements, and I still get choked up when I think about it.

So what's the ideal scenario, if it all falls right? You submit a one-page story outline to the editor of the respective comic book. He loves it. He uses the self-addressed stamped envelope you included to write back to you and asks you to flesh it out into a full plot (presumably sending you a sample so that you have an idea of how to do it). You develop it as a full plot. The editor loves it, you get paid for it, and it gets sent off to an artist.

Do I get to script it myself? If you want to, sure. Remember, you're trying to make it easier for

the editor. If he or she has to find someone to script your work because you can't handle it, you have that much less value.

What if they steal my idea? The only thing slimmer than the odds of your breaking in is the odds of your ideas being swiped. There's simply no motivation for the editors to do so. Remember, ideally the editor wants writers to help him get the comic books out, not would-be writers who are angry because their ideas got filched. You must also keep in mind that you might submit something that someone else has come up with independently, and it's already in the works; many a tyro has assumed that his ideas was usurped, and went around badmouthing the writer and editor of the comic book. That's not a way to make friend and influence people, and it's generally unfounded (unless you're Art Buchwald).

Is there any way to improve the odds a bit?

Well, $10 clipped to your story submission might help.

Just kidding.

Yes, ther are ways to improve the odds on becoming a writer for Marvel or DC. In fact, almost anything you do will improve the odds, because frankly, they can't get much worse than what they are when you submit a story cold.

Three commonplace ways to have a better shot at being a writer for the Big Two:

(1) Get writing credits somewhere else first. It doesn't necessarily have to be one of the independent comics publishers. [As a pure digression, I must admit I'm a little fuzzy on the term "independents." Is Marvel still a British colony or something that it's not independent? Is DC a British colony (well, maybe, yeah, now that I think about it). As for the so-called "independents," sometimes they don't own the characters they publish. These alleged independents have less control over their fates, particularly if they are dependent on such things as the whims of licensors. Go figure semantics, huh?]

If you cover letter can list professional experience in other forms of writing— news writing, copy writing, published short stories— anything that proves that you know how to put sentences together and meet a deadline will be of help. Not that you have to submit your resume with every story. A couple of lines on your cover letter will suffice.

(2) Go to conventions. Try to give an editor a face to put with a name. At smaller, less-crowded conventions, it's possible for editors and writers to read and comment on your stuff. If you're going to a larger convention, such as San Diego, I suggest— as difficult as it may sound— that you boil your ideas down to verbal pitches of 25 words or less. If you grab an editor with a neat verbal hook ("Daredevil's hypersenses inform him that a politician's pacemaker is actually a bomb— but the politician hates superheroes and won't trust him!") and get the editor going, "Yeah? Yeah? And then?"— you can pull out your one-page outline with a flourish and hand it to him.

On a personal note: I will never read a plot outline, if it deals with characters I write. It's my way of avoiding possible hassles. But if time and circumstances at a convention permit, I will read outlines involving other characters. But please— if you see a writer or editor go into the bathroom, don't follow him in and slide your story under the door of the stall. I can't speak for others in the industry, but you won't like what I do with anything handed to me in that manner.

(3) Get a job at Marvel or DC. To be honest, that's what happened with me. Except when I got a job at Marvel, it was in sales, and I didn't get the job because I hoped to angle into writing. My career was genuinely in sales. I tried the writing on the side, just for kicks. I had no idea that it would develop into what it has or that eventually I would be writing columns in trade magazines, trying to advise others on how to emulate what I laughingly refer to as my success.

If you're lucky enough to land an office job, it becomes that much easier because, of course, people will get to know you. Even if you don't get a job, the whole trick is to make a memorable and positive impression on the people to whom you hope to sell the story. Come up with clever, dynamic ways to get yourself— and your stories— noticed. What sort of ways? You're supposed to be a writer. Use your imagination. ■

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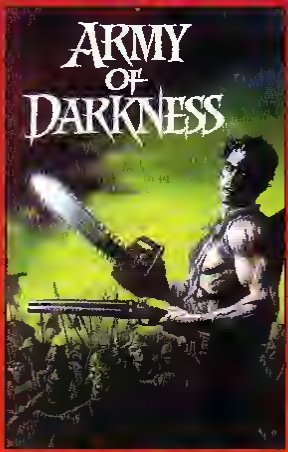

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Keown's Misunderstood Monster

BY PAUL ROBB

Dale Keown is living out his childhood fantasies. From playing in a rock band to getting to draw the *Incredible Hulk*, Keown has always seemed to be able to make his dreams come true. Now, upon joining Image Comics, he hopes to bring yet another memorable character, PITT, to life to rival the Hulk's cult following. PITT had a sneak preview pin-up in Todd McFarlane's *Spawn* #1. Here, Keown talks about the Hulk, the creation of PITT, and music's relationship with comics.

WIZARD: Tell me about your background, for those who might not know anything about you.

KEOWN: Well, my first job came in 1986-1987. I played music in rock bands and toured all over. I ended up in Ottawa, Canada, before my last band failed. I would draw a lot of pictures while on the road. I got better and better sitting there drawing, while trying to unwind. We would play from 9 p.m. until 1 to 3 a.m. so you had days to yourself. When the band folded, I had to get a day job— as a butcher's assistant. I was in no position to move to New York, but I really wanted to draw. I was watching the television news when I saw a segment about this comic-book company, Aircel. I called them up and they thought I was just some... kid. I don't know what they thought. I really wanted to draw so I went down there. I was persistent. I had been working on some *Fantastic Four* submissions, about five pages, and they said "You're hired" on the spot.

WIZARD: What book did you do?

KEOWN: I was the artist on *Samurai*. I did it for two years. Then I did a superhero series, *Dragonforce*, for two years.

WIZARD: When did you start doing the *Hulk*?

KEOWN: I think it was the summer of 198[illegible]. I had trained myself to draw these characters because they were the kind of characters I liked when I was growing up reading comics. I [illegible] first approach [illegible] I saw Rick Jones for the *Marvel Universe* update and that didn't happen. I struck when the irons were hot... but Bobbie Chase was the editor most responsible for helping me get the *Hulk*. She asked me to take over for John Byrne on the *She-Hulk*. It was dumb luck. My first Hulk cover was on *What the?* I started on the *Hulk* series with issue 367— the one with a Walt Simonson Cover. It's funny, because the day before I got the Hulk job I was saying to myself,

what book would be the ultimate muscle.. larger than life, and it was the Hulk— either him or Thor.

WIZARD: So how did the Image job, joining them, come about?

KEOWN: The only person from Image that I had met before was Todd McFarlane. I remember at Christmas he and I sat around and talked. He told a lot of Marvel stories. He had met a lot more people and hinted that if all of these artists ever started their own imprint, it would be great. I didn't know he was serious at the time. I really can do my own work. I can ink my own work and it's with Image that I can accomplish that. The big reason why I joined Image is creative control— making your own choices. You can choose whoever you want— the penciller, the colorist.

WIZARD: So you're going to write as well as draw this new series?

KEOWN: Yes, actually. I'm co-writing with Brian Hotton. I've written some before, on Aircel's *Dragonforce*. It's a lot harder than a person thinks, but it's easier with two people.

WIZARD: Tell me about PITT.

KEOWN: PITT— it's not an acronym, it's the name of the character you will. PITT is a hybrid of the aliens, an evolutionary throwback, with the claws and the muscle. Seer has this power to turn these creatures against themselves. Seer has this apprentice – I don't have a name for him yet – this boy, this young crippled alien. PITT kills the boy and then Seer blanks PITT's mind in order to save the boy and puts the boy's consciousness into PITT.

Then we deal with how he has to escape and how the aliens think he's a traitor. He falls into this black hole and shoots across space and lands on Earth. These bounty hunters have been sent to bring him back. He then meets an eight-year-old boy, Timmy, who is roughly the equivalent of the age of the boy that is in PITT's mind. So it's like they're a couple of boys hanging out (laughs). So, he's learning English from an eight-year-old.

WIZARD: That should be interesting.

KEOWN: Yes, there will be a lot of learning, action, and some flashbacks... the first four issues will be a rollercoaster ride, with some action-packed ripping issues. It's complicated and involved, with a lot of history. There will be your typical bank robbery or mugging so we will be coming across ordinary humans. At one point, PITT will be trying to dress like a human and trying to blend in.

WIZARD: That won't be easy, will it?

KEOWN: (laughter) Yeah, but he has no nose— it's not visual. He tries to disguise himself with goggles and a helmet. He's sort of a dirty fleshtone color... I couldn't make him green, for obvious reasons, and besides Erik Larsen's already got a character that's green. Erik and I— we think alike — we both like these monster leading men. They're misunderstood monsters, which is what I liked about the Hulk. Especially John Byrne's run in 1985...

WIZARD: Are you prepared for the criticism that you're

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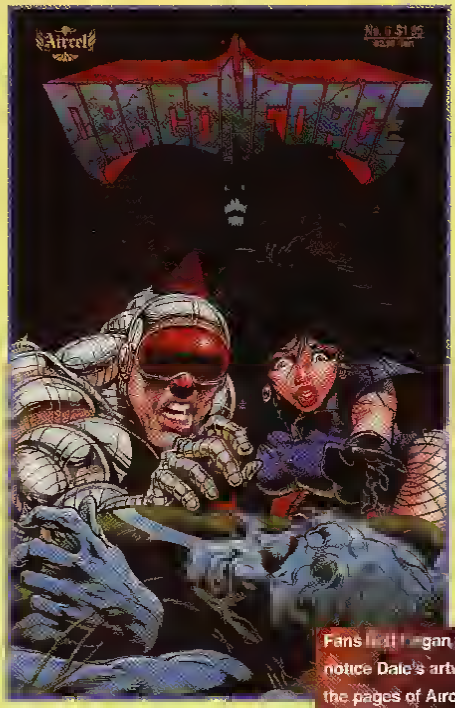


Fans had began to notice Dale's artwork in the pages of Aircel's *DragonForce*...

just ripping off the Hulk?

KEOWN: Yes. I try to ignore trends and I know people will think, "Oh, Dale's just ripping off the Hulk," but I don't care what they think. I'm not copying the Hulk. **WIZARD:** Were there any hard feelings between you and Marvel when you decided to leave?

KEOWN: No hard feelings. They gave me a lot of freedom on the Hulk, but when you're selling 100,000 copies, there are not a lot of rules.

WIZARD: Will PITT crossover with other Image characters?

KEOWN: Oh, sure. I'd like to use the outer space concept and Jim Lee has some space aliens. That would be cool. We'll bring all kinds of surprises. We want to be unpredictable— it's spontaneous.

WIZARD: How much of PITT's storyline do you have plotted out?

KEOWN: Brian and I have the whole storyline history—a bible, if you will, a blueprint to go by. Once you create a character here, it belongs to you. I have to give the okay for my character to be used by any of the others and the same goes for me. I could call Erik up and ask him if I can use the Savage Dragon. But I bet he won't let me. (laughter)

WIZARD: How do you get along with your Image partners?

KEOWN: In Chicago, I noticed we're all alike. We all sort of like to draw. There is a competitive nature, not so much about deadline because we're concerned about the quality of our characters, but we do send a lot of faxes to each other.

WIZARD: Faxes? About what?

KEOWN: Ideas. Art. Mock-up covers. Dialogue. To see who can come up with the coolest characters.

WIZARD: Maybe you should have a contest to see who could create a new character the fastest. .

KEOWN: Jim Lee would win that one, hands down. This is a really good company to be with. I'm glad I joined

WIZARD: Will there be any spinoffs from *PITT*?

KEOWN: Good question. You never know... we will be introducing other superheroes and heroines in *PITT*, but it's not defined yet. I like what Erik is doing— his character is fighting supervillains. I was trying to make *PITT* more realistic. Maybe we should throw in some supervillains... we could have more fun with them. With supervillains they can just appear, with no real origins. Bring them in and it's open-ended. You can do whatever you want.

WIZARD: Does it seem strange to be working for the other guys?

KEOWN: Yeah, it feels weird to be on the other side, and not get calls from my editor. I'm overseeing the color and I have more responsibilities here. We're a little protective of our stuff... we're picky in certain places. We want to keep it within the parameters of the character.

WIZARD: What's the target date for the series' debut?

KEOWN: Sometime in November.

WIZARD: What else can you tell us about PITT?

KEOWN: He's a mysterious character. A brooding, shadowy character. His relationship with the boy (inside his mind) will come out. You never know, you guess at things... is it PITT or the other consciousness? I'm naming the young boy Gareb— you know like the *Wizard* publisher's name? Do you think

© 1992 Marvel

...And went wild over his powerful rendition of Marvel's Greenskinned Goliath

he'll mind? (laughter)
WIZARD: No, I don't think he'll mind. Knowing him, he'll probably be flattered
KEOWN: I have a thing for alien-type names. It sounds like something you'd hear on *Star Trek*. . it rolls off the tongue and is peaceful. It's positive. PITT, on the other side of the coin, makes you think of the pit of a peach, or someone's armpit (laughter) or a vicious dog (pit bull). It conjures up the negative.
WIZARD: Where did you come up with the name PITT anyway?
KEOWN: It actually comes from the manager of the last rock band I played in, back in 1988. I thought PITT was a cool name. I'm glad nobody's used it. It surprises me that nobody did. So even then, he was forming in the back of my mind. In the first drawing of him I did, I gave him these retractable claws, which visually worked, but now what am I going to do? I didn't want a Wolverine thing. But PITT's claws only go back to his first knuckle and first finger.
WIZARD: So he's pretty primitive?
KEOWN: Yes, he's a mutant, a hybrid. He's like a caveman you have to teach him how to do things... in a way, it's like the Hulk's dual personality... there are parallels.
WIZARD: Won't that bother people?
KEOWN: I'll probably get some flak, but nobody's really reinventing anything. We're taking the superhero world and reshaping it in our own way. It's hard to come up with original ideas since everything's been done before...
WIZARD: What would you have done if you had stayed and gotten to write the *Hulk*?
KEOWN: I would have loved to have written at least two issues of the *Hulk* and do the character the way I see him. I would have made him more sullen and alone— he doesn't need anybody. But at Marvel, there are too many rules. If I'm really itching to do my own thing, I might as well just do it.
WIZARD: So are you enjoying it?
KEOWN: I'm really having a ball. It's great, it's fun and exciting... I'm loving to draw this guy!
WIZARD: What's your work schedule like?
KEOWN: Oh, I keep weird hours. If I have a lot of work to do, I shift work hours around. I live in this creaky house with two other musicians, so there's a drum set and guitars around. I usually get up at 1 a.m. and have a cup of coffee. At that time of day it's so quiet. You know what works when you're by yourself. I take a breakfast break at 9 a.m. and usually fall asleep at 7 p.m. Sometimes I listen to music and sometimes I don't have to, I'll hear it in my head. I listen to hard rock. Deep Purple, Metallica. Heavy metal. It's larger than life and goes with the characters.
WIZARD: Really?
KEOWN: Yeah, in fact, I've already written a PITT theme song. I'd like to release it with one of the issues, you know, not a flexidisc, but include an ad and have them send away for the CD..
WIZARD: That sounds cool...
KEOWN: Yeah, I think so. I think the next step is music in comics. I think it's a good idea. If it's properly done, it would work. But I don't want to call it a gimmick. It'd be from the heart. The PITT theme song sums up the whole mood of the book. The song is about five minutes long.
WIZARD: Take your music experience and combine the two?
KEOWN: I'd love to do that. Who's more qualified?
WIZARD: How did you and Brian meet?
KEOWN: Brian and I met each other in a band called Sad. He was the guitarist and had written a science-fiction screenplay. We got along and I asked him to be my partner and we've been partners since 1985.
WIZARD: Will people be surprised to find that you can write too?
KEOWN: I think people will be surprised that I can write and tell some good stories, but you've got to please yourself from a writer's point of view.
WIZARD: Will it be anything like Marvel's books?
KEOWN: No, it's not the typical Marvel fight on every page, with all the violence. I learned structure from Peter David and about foreshadowing . the bounty hunters will be the subplot, with PITT on a Harley being chased down the highway. Poor Timmy! From an Earth point of view, he's an orphan and he's confused himself.
WIZARD: What do you think of the artist/writer controversy?
KEOWN: I hope not to get that flak, but I do expect it.. all I can say is I definitely have a story to tell. ■

WIZARD'S REALM

BY DORIS SCHWARTZ

First, I wish to congratulate all of you who answered the question, "What do the letters in T S R stand for?" The correct answer is Tactical Studies Rules Many of you really went all out and researched your old books and *Dragon* magazines to get the answer; some of you went so far as to call T.S.R.'s offices to get it In any event, you used true gamer grit and did your research and I'm proud of each of you.

A reference tool I have found to be useful and fun to use is the series of Central Casting books published by Task Force Games There are three in the series that will captivate the medieval fantasy player, Heroes Now, and future world and science-fiction gamer, Heroes of Tomorrow They all aid the G.M. (game master) in creating three-dimensional characters to use either as player or non-player characters Note that I said the *Game Master*, and not *player* here, there is a reason which I will reveal to you later in this review

"The purpose of this book is to help you create detailed exciting and even mysterious background for your characters." Those of you who have been playing for a while might decide to sit down and write your character's history so that he or she doesn't seem one dimensional Yes, our characters have strength and wisdom and dexterity, intelligence, etc. But do they have a a soul? Do they have a personality and if so where did it come from? I was told by my aunt that I got my artistic ability from my grandma who was a clothing designer. And the family tree contains actors and doctors and writers and even a murder

If you saw *Roots* on TV, you know how filling in a person's heritage can make the character seem to come alive In role-play gaming, the more realistic the characters background the more fun it is to see how he or she will use his heritage to get out of a situation or to create one I can remember a character who was told all her life by family about the escapades of a great aunt who was a magic user; she got out of a scrape by retelling of a great deed done by this aunt as though it were she herself who had conjured up a dragon. And don't you think it would be important to find out what type of military training your character had in the past or the importance of knowing whether or not you are the legitimate heir to a fortune?

Give your character a reason to be. A two-dimensional character can only be played two-dimensionally.

Well, Central Casting helps you to randomly create a character's heritage, by rolling dice and following a path of tables We did find some pitfalls with this system, and this is why I said earlier that a G M should work with the player in creating a character's background What we found was that, at times, dice rolls are so poor as to kill off the character during the creation of a background

I decided to use the services of one of the D M.s in the Wizard's game room to help me roll up a character for this review I did this to keep my character as true to straight rolls as possible but knowing that my D M would suggest that certain rolls of the dice be done over, for a greater continuity of the character without being unfair to either my character or others he has running This character will be the basis of our contest this issue, so read the following carefully

I won't have time to go through the entire process which takes anywhere from 1 to 2 hours I will, however, go through the first few steps and then give you the description we worked out The first step is to read the instructions!!

A beautiful thing about this book is that it's written in a conversational tone like this article and so it is not only easy to read but fun to work through. The hour or so seems to glide by, especially if you are working with someone If seems as though it is just a part of playing the game

Step two is to create a character race, if you have not already selected one. Roll a d20 (20 sided die). 1-14 is

human; 15-16 elf; 17 dwarf; 18 halfling; 19 half elf; 20 other races. Here the book asks you to roll a 19 so the character is a half elf. I then rolled a two-sided die (Impossible, you say? Not really, you roll a d4--even is one, odd is two.) to determine my character's sex, odds would be female, evens male. I rolled a 2. So we start with a male half elf. The book describes a half elf as having the vitality of humankind and the beauty and nature for being different.

Next I rolled for my cultural background. The culture in which a character begins life is a significant factor in determining perceptions and prejudices. His or her attitudes and beliefs will be an outgrowth of culture.

My dice roll said I was civilized and that I lived in the wilds rather than an urban setting. Some additional information here was a culture modifier dice roll. This and other modifying dice rolls are to be used later.

Next we rolled for social status. For this we need a d100 or two ten-sided dice. To roll to 100% with ten-siders, use two different colors--one is to be used as 10s, such as 10, 20, 30, and so on, the other for the ones. So if you roll a red tens and a blue ones and they come out red 9 and blue 5 it's read as 95--which were my dice rolls. I was told to add my culture modifier of 4 to this to make 99. On the social status table, a 99 is nobility, and I was told to go to another table to determine my title. Turns out I'm a royal prince.

The following is a full description of this character as worked out of Central Casting.

A 29-year-old half elf male who, although a prince, is the legitimate first-born son of a king deposed by a rival faction. His father and mother are presently wealthy merchants dealing in fine art, tapestries, sculpture, and exotic textiles. An aunt, who is both an artisan (fine tapestries) and a vintner (extremely wealthy, owns rich, fertile vineyards) is a member of a vintner's guild, saved my life at age 6.

I was stricken with a disabling lung disease, almost dead, when she treated me with an extremely bitter wine. From that day on I have never been sick, injured in battle, yes, but never sick. All four of my noble grandparents are still alive and reside in our family estates in the Irish fen (low lands, sometimes swampy).

My family, including my younger brother, all live in the fen where I was brought up and in which I have extreme knowledge of survival. I was born in the month of December during a snow storm. However, at the time of my birth, there were two strange events: 1) There was suddenly unseasonably beautiful weather, and 2) all the wolves, foxes and dogs barked and celebrated my birth.

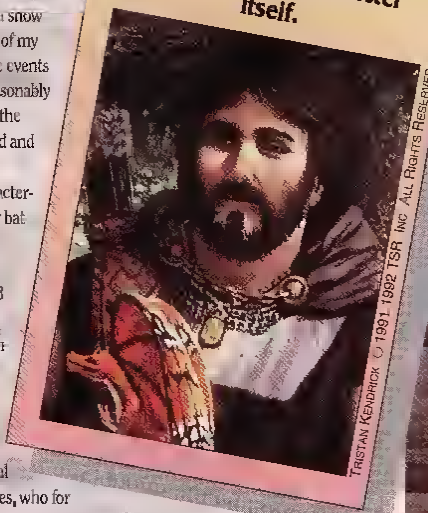
I was born with the characteristic beauty of an elf however battle scars have left me with a disfiguring scar to cause my comeliness to be 8. I have 13 years of service as a mercenary, including chief of intelligence in both the monster and tracking squads, and a three year hitch in the suicide squad, from which I retired with the highest medal and highest honors. The fairies, who for some reason adore me, cast a spell to bring my comeliness back up to 4. I do, however, have one scar that is considered impressive and indicative of all my military prowess and ability. The fairies presented me with +1 elven chainmail that repairs itself after battle.

I mustered out of service with 185 gold pieces and the following skills at specified rank levels (Central Casting rank levels are as follows: 0=none, 1=raw, 2=apprentice, 3=average, 4=fairly competent, 5=good, 6=very good, 7=master, 8=reowned master, 9=grand master, 10=legendary skill, 11=mythical skill):

Swimming 2; trailing 2, bow 3, short sword 3; constitution +4; forest survival=3, camouflage=3, tracking=6, find drinkable water=3. Long sword both hands=8 shield=1, repair armor=6, spear=2, first aid=4, 2 handed ax=2, see weakness of others +2 to hit, hide in cover=3, disarm opponent=1, wine tasting=3, imitate monster noises=2, slight of hand=3, bargaining with merchants=2

Upon leaving the service I went into service as Royal Knight in the Kingdom of Garth as the master of swords. However, I am truly in service to the sylvan god of the fairies and am protector of the fen. My life experience has shown me to be respectful to others and have a romantic nature, however, I have a dark side. On a scale of 1-6, I rank 4 as a lover and seeker of violence.

Your character's history can be as interesting and exciting as the character itself.



Now for the contests we will have two this issue. For those of you who are artists, I would like a full-body drawing of this chap showing his surroundings, and for those of you who don't draw, write me a story of 300 words or less detailing how he got his scar of valor and give him a name equal to his birth rite.

The winners will each get a full set of Central Casting and we will publish both the drawing and the story in an upcoming issue. Please have entries postmarked by December 10, 1992. Don't forget, the Wizard's Game Room is on the west coast. Send your entries to

Wizards Game Room
c/o I Love Games Too!
111 West Ave. Palizada
San Clemente, CA 92672

And remember if you are near San Clemente call us at (714)-498-3895 or better yet, *come play with us*!! See you next month! ■

Amazing ART

The Showcase Of Future Comic Book Illustrators of America!

TERMINATOR ™ & © 1992 CAROLCO

Jerry Scullion
Ivyland, PA

CHECK IT OUT! Not only are tha guys ovar at Valiant Comics giving away a fraa gold-logo *Etarnal Warrior* #1 (which goas for about $160!) to thair favorite Amataur Art showing Valiant charactars aach month, but now we wanna gat into tha acti Each month, tha best Amataur Art showing something just having to do with *Wizard* will gat a fraa Wizard Gold-Foil trading cardi Good luck!

All you need to do to enter Wizard's Amazing Art Contest is send your artwork with your name, address, telephone number and age to:

Amazing Artists
Wizard Press
P.O. Box 648
Nanuet, NY 10954-0648

Submissions can be on any form of un-lined paper or posterboard, and can be in any medium (oils crayon, line art, etc) Neon or metallic inks will not print. Artwork must not be larger than 8" x 11 1/4" Do not fold, bend or roll artwork mail them flat to avoid damage All submissions are non-returnable and become property of Wizard Press Employees of Valiant Comics are the sole judges of the Gold Eternal Warrior contest, and all decisions are final Good Luck!

THE DEMON ETRIGAN ™ & © 1992 DC COMICS

Bill Zehnpfennig
Oregon, OH Age: 27

SPIRAL™ © 1992 MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

Steven Ciancanelli & James Tung

Bayside, NY Age: 17 and 16

MAGNUS™ & © 1992 WESTERN PUBLISHING

WINNER VALIANT'S GOLD ETERNAL WARRIOR #1

Ben Go

Virginia Beach, VA Age: 23

SHAZAM™ & © 1992 DC COMICS

Lawrence Reynolds

Southfield, MI Age: 21

WINNER WIZARD'S GOLD-FOIL TRADING CARD

Art Lapham

Fall River, MA Age: 29

ALL DRESSED UP

"AAAAAAH!" Yup, that scary season is upon us, where gangs of lawless young toughs roam the streets coating cars with shaving cream, using eggs as projectiles and doing unspeakable acts to household pets unlucky enough to be left out in the cold. No, it ain't Christmas yet you ninny, it's *Halloween*!! And what better way to celebrate the holiday season than to dress up like a carnival freak and have your picture shown to about a million fellow comic fans? So without further adieu...

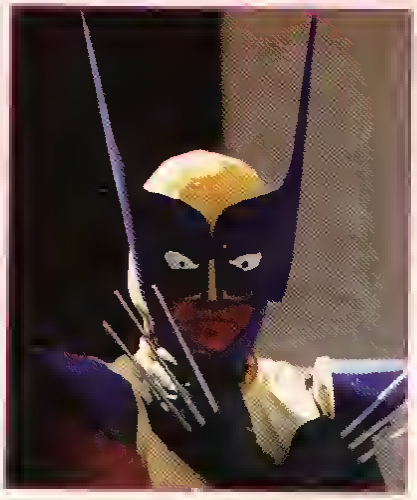
This photo is possibly the cutest thing I have ever seen mailed into Wizard. Nightcrawler (though the height leads me to believe we're actually dealing with a Bamf) hails from the windy city of Chicago, IL, and is really Piers A. Zurawski in disguise. Pier states, "I enjoy Nightcrawler because he disappears and climbs up walls." Well, Pier, you won the first annual Wizard costume contest hands down and headed your way is a ToyBiz Nightcrawler action figure, a set of the *Nightcrawler* limited series, as well as a copy of *Wizard* #16 autographed by the entire crew here at Wizard! Congratulations Pier!

Hey, isn't that the dude who supposedly killed all the X-Men? Nah, it's really Miles Smith (age 13) of West Point, NY as everyone's favorite cajun charmer. "The Reason I like the Gambit character..." Miles states, "...is because he has such a strange costume, and that he gets all the X-Chucks."

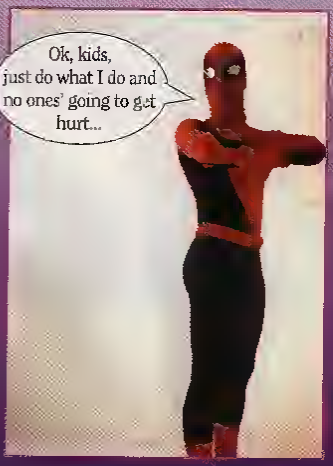
By gum, it's that pesky lil' Robin bugger, straight from the pages of *Robin III: Cry of The Huntress*. In case the Joker is reading this and wants to finish the job started in *Batman* #428, Robin is actually Greg Siff of Belle Harbor NY (age 14) who chose Robin because "...he kicks butt!"

WITH NO PLACE TO GO

Hmmm, it looks like that super-soldier serum hasn't quite kicked in yet. Anyway, Troy Delamare of Regina, SK, Canada (age 15) portrays the mighty Captain. Troy states "...I chose Captain America because it would be challenging to make his costume... and he's just really awesome."



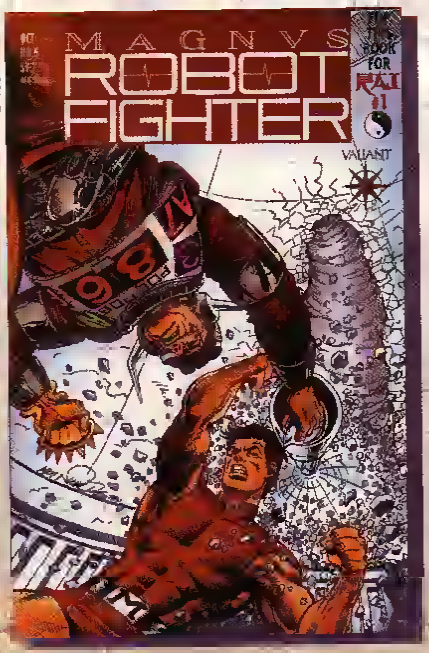
A little bit too much caffine in Wolvie's diet of late, I think. Geez, out of all the costume entries, Manuel Ramirez of Phoenix, AZ (age 15) has the most... alert looking design. Manuel chose Wolverine because his costume was "...challenging to create."



SPECIAL SILLINESS ALERT! Paul Rogus of Burbank, CA (age 32) has not only taken the time to photograph himself (Yup, taking a picture with a timer. Man, does that sound familiar...), but through this special, limited time offer, you too can... "POLKA WITH SPIDEY!" Just follow along, watch your feet, ya don't needa costume to polka but don't let your friends see you do it!

Ok, that wraps up our little tribute to Halloween, but don't let that stop you from mailing in entries. Just get a photograph of yourself in any cool costume and send in several clear, in-focus photos of yourself in various poses and mail 'em in along with your name, address, age, and why you chose that character to Costume Contest, Wizard Press, P.O. Box 648, Nanuet NY, 10954.

COMIC



© 1992 VALIANT

MAGNUS ROBOT FIGHTER #5

ARTIST:Paul Creddick
WRITER:Jim Shooter
PUBLISHER:Valiant
RELEASE DATE:Oct.91

Can Valiant get any more popular? First they began popping up in Picks From The Wizard's Hat, then they went on to dominate the Top Ten Hottest Comics chart, and now here's one showing up in the Comic Watch. So what's so hot about this book? A whole slew of things actually. To start off, *Magnus* #5 was printed back in the days when Valiant was still in diapers, and this has a really limited print run. You won't find these babies collecting dust in a dealer's bulk storage box. Another juicy little tidbit is that this issue also contained one of the redeemable coupons needed for the mail-away offer for *Magnus* #0, so out of the handful of copies that exist, a good chunk of those have the coupons chopped out. Finding a "mint" copy has just become that much harder. Not convinced? Need more of a sales push to get you excited? OK, put this in your pipe and smoke it. This is the first appearance of a true Valiant superhero!! In case you didn't know, Magnus and Solar, the first two characters from the mighty Valiant aren't Valiant characters. They're owned by Western Publishing. So, not only is this Rai's first appearance, it's also the first appearance of a true Valiant superhero. Now before you go running out into the street hunting down *Magnus* #5, also know that this is hot-up-and-coming artist Dave Lapham's first published work, even though he's not listed in the credits.

WATCH

SAVAGE DRAGON © 1992 ERIK LARSEN

MEGATON #3

ARTIST: Erik Larson
WRITER: Erik Larson
PUBLISHER : Megaton Comics
RELEASE DATE: Feb. 1986

Who are those geeks on the cover? The stupid looking one with the giant Q-Tips on his head is lame and who cares, but the other dude, the one with the ripped pants and the physique of the Hulk on Slim-Fast...it couldn't be...is it?.. HOLY CRAPOLA, IT IS !! That's the the Savage Dragon, the dude straight from the the mighty Image comics. Yup, even though he may look a little different (man, did he look like a geek back then or what?), this is the first appearance of the big S.D. So what the hell is he doing in *Megaton* #3 of all places? Well, during *Megaton's* eight-issue run, a whole bunch of really cool things happened in this book Not only did a whole bunch of new characters make their debut in this title, *Megaton* also was the showcase for a host of today's hottest artists. Jackson Guice, S. Clarke Hawbaker, Rob Liefeld, Angel Medina and, of course, Erik Larson With the monster succes of *Savage Dragon* #1, it's pretty clear that ol' finhead is popular with the kids So when the kiddies go looking for his first appearance, they're not gonna be looking for the mega-print *S.D* #1, it'll be the low-print, low-key *Megaton* #3.

FIRST APPEARANCE ALERT (SORT OF)

The Dragon had one earlier appearance Erik Larson self-published a comic called *Graphic Fantasy* #1 in 1982, but it was distributed by Larson, not a national distributor

THE WIZARD'S CRYSTAL BALL

BY WILLIAM CHRISTENSEN & MARK SEIFERT

November is an unusually big publishing month this year. Normally the fall seems pretty tame when compared to the fervor of the summer months, but this year, as the fight for market share continues to escalate among publishers, comic readers and speculators should be on the look out for some interesting product.

The biggest news of the month is the death of Superman. As you are no doubt already aware, this is DC's strongest promotional push ever. The story line will cross over into all the Superman titles (and a few other DC titles) and culminate in *Superman* #75, which in DC's style of late, will come in both newsstand and "pre-bagged with fun stuff" versions. This book has already received a great deal of attention from the mainstream media, which will pull in readers from outside of normal comic-book circles. It's true that tons of these will be printed, but this is something that literally every comic-book reader will want to take a look at, as well as all of the people pulled in by all the media attention. While we don't expect *Superman* #75 to increase in value overnight, it could cause a great deal of demand for some of the crossover books that lead up to Superman's death, and if it pulls new customers into stores like it's supposed to, it could even lead to increased sales for some of the other eye-catching books on the stands at the same time, such as *Bloodshot* #1 from Valiant.

Bloodshot #1 will feature a chromium cover. The chromium process uses colored and embossed foil, so it's like a cross between a *Silver Sable* #1-type cover and a *Guardians of the Galaxy* #25-type cover. Bloodshot is the new Rai introduced in *Rai* #0. A Japanese company has implanted this man with microchips, turning him into a computer-enhanced, mind-controlled corporate killer. He breaks free of his control and seeks revenge on his former masters. This character should have wide-spread appeal even beyond Valiant's current readership. Valiant already has a solid reputation for producing quality books, and *Bloodshot* #1 should be no exception. Some collectors may balk at the $3.50 cover price, however, the special cover will probably force Valiant to set the print run fairly early, so there won't be too many unclaimed extras out there.

The *Harbinger* TPB is another Valiant product worth looking at this month. This $9.95 package reprints *Harbinger* #1-4, and will include a copy of *Harbinger* #0 shrink-wrapped to the package. With copies of #1-4 going for well over $250 when you can find them, many Valiant readers will see this as the only reasonable option available to them. It will also be the only way many are going to be able to get a copy of #0. Don't let the $9.95 cover and TPB format scare you away from this one. Th copies printed up will most likely be scarfed up overnight by Valiant fans who are desperate to get this material.

Probably the most overlooked book of the month will be *Magnus* #21. In a shake-up similar to what's happening with Rai, Valiant is basically re-launching this book. The new creative team of Ostrander and Brock are completely changing the direction of the title. There will be a new costume for Magnus and a new robot shell for IA. Earth will be attacked by a robot planet that was introduced in the Gold Key *Magnus* series. Of course, only Magnus can save the day. Valiant promises this to be a key event in the Valiant universe.

Honorable mention dept. A few more things this month are worth a mention. Dale Keown's *Pitt* #1 from Image probably won't skyrocket overnight, but consider the facts: (1) It's a regular series. (2) Keown had writing experience early in his career. (3) While Keown's no Jim Lee in the fan-popularity department, he hasn't had a lot of exposure to the audiences that read Image books. Dale's certainly got the talent, and if he sticks with this title for awhile, his popularity and *Pitt* #1's value will continue to grow. Also worth a look is *Doom 2099* #1, on the strength of an embossed cover and the 2099 concept popularity, and *Punisher War Journal* #50 with an embossed cover and Mark Texiera art.

You've probably noticed that this column has focused on Valiant, Image, and a few of the other alternate publishers lately. These publishers' books have been on the rise because their readership has been rapidly increasing over the past few months. It's much easier for them to increase their following than it is for Marvel or DC to increase their comparatively large readership. Until such time as this situation stabilizes, some books from the smaller publishers will continue to shine in the Crystal Ball. ■

Will and Mark are both cool dudes and comic historians, and they manage one of the best stores in Illinois: Comic Cavalcade, at 502 East John St. Champaign, IL 61820, (217) 384-2211.

PICKS FROM THE WIZARD'S HAT

Here's a listing of the hottest books shipping in November!

Bloodshot #1

Artist: Don Perlin
Writer: VanHook
Releasa Date: November
Covar Price: $3.50

As those of you wise enough to pick up a copy of *Rai* #0—and actually read it--already know, Bloodshot was released from his capture by a Japanese conglomerate, courtesy of Geoffrey, the geomancer. He was originally a Mafia strong guy with a crazy side so, fearing he was a loose cannon, the mob sold him out to the government. The government in turn transferred his rights, so to speak, to the aforementioned Japanese conglomerate. This world power wanted to start an army consisting of experimental soldiers, who, because they have computer microchips injected into their bloodstream, would be subject to follow every programmed demand of their captors. Geoffrey, knowing that the original blood coursing through Bloodshot's veins would later have vast future implications, interrupts the experiment and Bloodshot is born. Thanks to the infusion, his abilities as a mercenary are heightened, and he begins his quest to take down those who sold him out, and to avoid the Japanese, who want their "guinea pig" back! This title will certainly take on more of a Punisher-type theme giving all you little violence lovers out there something to really sink your teeth into. This blazing first issue will sport a Barry Windsor-Smith cover, and a fold-out poster. To top everything off, this issue will have the first ever chromium cover, and from the samples we've seen this one's spectacular! (Altogether: Oooh, Aaah!)

Bloodshot™ & © 1992 Voyager Communications, Inc.

Superman #75

Artist: Don Jurgens
Writer: Dan Jurgens
Release Date: Nov. 17
Cover Price: $2.50

Part six of the six part Doomsday storyline could very well be the most shocking book DC has published in a bunch of years. The titanic battle between Supes and Doomsday (yes, we love that name) reaches it's cross-country climax as they get to Metropolis. One of the fun innovations that DC is utilizing throughout the final four installments of the crossover, is with each book, the action gets so huge and dramatic, the art panels go from 4 per spread down to 3, to 2, to 1, and finally, in where #75 each spread is a two-page splash. This is another innovation designed to give this book a great look and value. Included in this bagged collector's edition will be a commemorative postage stamp, a black armband, and Superman's obituary from the *Daily Planet*. There will also be a newsstand version with a different cover and none of the other premiums involved with the collector's edition. Well gang, in *Superman* #75 it appears that after numerous threats to his existence in the past, from every bad guy in the galaxy, Doomsday's finally the dude to turn our hero Kal-El into Kal Kan!

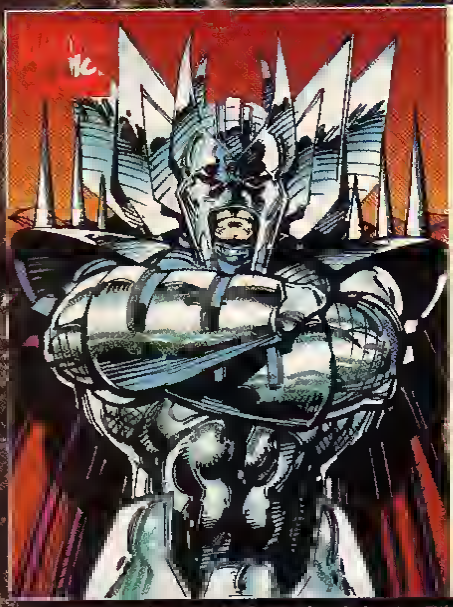
PITT #1

Artist: Dale Keown
Writer: Dale Keown
Release Date: November
Cover Price: $1.95

The newest addition to the ever impressive, ever-tardy Image universe is *PITT*. *PITT* is the brainchild of former *Hulk* penciler and fan-favorite Dale Keown. PITT (the name comes from a biker Keown knew, while playing in a rock band in Canada), is a member of an alien race whose mission is basically a rape and pillage of other planets. Through a psychic by the name of The Seer, the consciousness of a small alien boy (also a psychic) gets transferred into one of these aliens, collectively known now as PITT. As the PITT, this alien bad-guy is no longer bad, which makes him an outcast among the rest of his race. Seeking to escape from his now-enemies, PITT is sent to Earth by the all-knowing Seer, where he becomes buddies with an Earth boy named Timmy. Combining the alien boy's consciousness with Timmy, we now have two kids (sort of) running around to have fun. But remember, those wacky alien bad guys still want PITT! This should make for an interesting concept.

Superman™ & © 1992 DC Comics. PITT™ & © 1992 Dale Keown.

Stryfe's Stike File #1



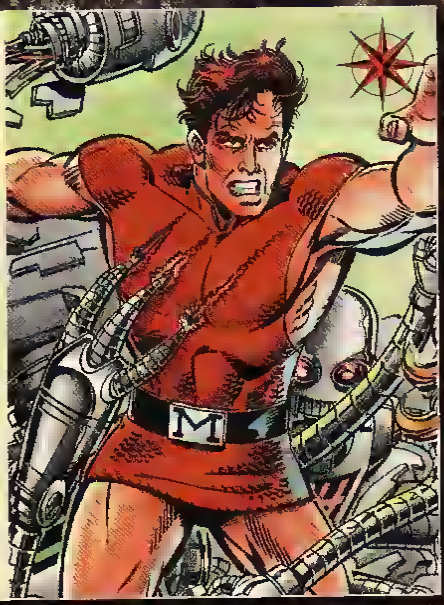
Artist: Kubert, Stroman & more
Writer: Nicieza, Lobdell & more
Release Date: November 3rd
Cover Price: $1.75

The first week of November brings us this little goodie, *Stryfe's Strike File* #1. The impetus for this is obviously, the appearances of Stryfe in both the two-part Cable saga and the 12 part "X-Cutioner's Song" fall Mutant crossover. The 32-page story (no ads) deals with Professor X's finding of the file and the myriad secrets and evil plans it contains. It concerns Stryfe's future ideas for all of mutantkind, both our heroes and villains alike. After all the trouble he and his Mutant Liberation Front have been perpetrating over the last two years, involving everyone from the New Mutants to the X-Men to X-Factor to even Spidey, Darkhawk and Sleepwalker, this should certainly be one interesting read. To add to the desirability and collectibility of this title, our fine pals at Marvel will be throwing on the trimmings on this one. Start with metallic ink cover. Throw in writing by hot X favorites Fabian Nicieza and Scott Lobdell, art by X-Boys (and future and former X-Boys) Andy Kubert, Greg Capullo, Larry Stroman, Darick Robertson and Jae Lee and it looks like a strong possibility that *Stryfe's Strike File* will be checked into by lots of us come November.

Magnus: Robot Fighter #21

Artist: James Brock
Writer: John Ostrender
Release Date: November
Cover Price: $2.25

Well into the second year of Valiant's longest running title, it's time to shake things up and get things going in a new direction. Bringing in well-respected scripter John Ostrander seems like a great idea to us, and it appears he'll be putting on the breaks and turning things around entirely! The planet from Russ Manning's first *Magnus* series, Malev-6, is a free will robot, and its newest free will decision is to declare war on another planet- Earth! Malev-6 decides its time to send all of its robot disciples to Earth and one of its targets of destruction is Magnus' former home, NorthAm. In the ensuing carnage, NorthAm is indeed destroyed, many people are murdered (including some main characters), while some get abducted and the entire planet turns to Magnus as its savior! The entire scope of the future Valiant universe is radically altered forever! (See *Rai and the Future Force* #9, on sale in January, a glimpse of which we can get at the end of the now legendary *Rai* #0.) Also, catch the new Magnus art duo of James Brock and Ralph Reese. They're gonna blow you away! *Magnus* #21 will be the springboard to lots of future fun for all of us!



Stryfe ™ & © 1992 Marvel Entertainment Group. Magnus ™ & © 1992 Western Publishing

MORE PICKS

Action Comics #685
DC COMICS: Funeral For A Friend p2 of 8- Supergirl takes over as guardian of Metropolis as Luthor builds a tomb for Superman. **$1.25**

Adventures of Superman #498
DC COMICS: Funeral For A Friend p1 of 8- All the world goes into mourning as the superhero community prepares for life without Superman. **$1.25**

Archer & Armstrong #7
VALIANT: It's been a long time since Armstrong's been to England, so Archer's in for some unusual sightseeing. **$2.50**

Avengers West Coast #90
MARVEL: With Iron Man and Living Lightning gone, it's up to the remaining members to fight Ultimate Ultron alone! **$1.25**

Batman #488
DC COMICS: Azrael joins the Batman supporting cast as Robin shows him the ropes of fighting crime. **$1.25**

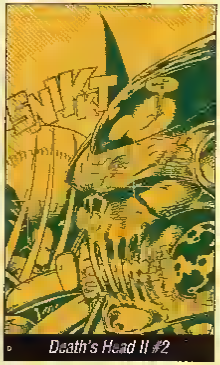
Batman: Legends of the Dark Knight #41
DC COMICS: Batman falls prey to the evils of the night and it's up to Alfred to play the role of Vampire Slayer to save him. **$1.75**

Batman: The Blue, The Grey & The Bat
DC COMICS: In this Elseworlds tale, Batman is in the old west during the Civil War on a secret mission for President Lincoln. **$5.95**

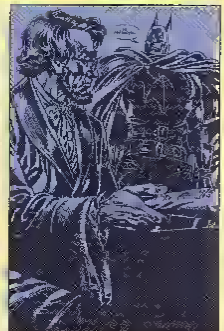
Black Canary #1
DC COMICS: A massive poll-fixing scheme gets way out of control, leading to uncontrolled mayhem and deaths. **$1.25**

Cyberforce #4
IMAGE: Cyberforce battles the SHOC COPS and the Mutant Liberation Army to save all of New York in the last issue of this mini series. **$1.95**

Black Canary #1


Death's Head II #2

Adventures of Superman #498


The Blue, The Grey and The Bat

Darkhawk #23
MARVEL: Darkhawk's evil counterpart, Evilhawk, makes his first appearance as we learn more about the powers of the Darkhawk armor. **$1.25**

Death's Head II #2
MARVEL: Wolverine and Death's Head II rumble as the Sapphire Lotus is stolen and Tuck is kidnapped! **$1.75**

Deathstroke #18
DC COMICS: Deathstroke leads the Brotherhood of Evil into Russia to steal some nuclear warheads. **$1.75**

The Demon #31
DC COMICS: When Jason Blood needs to keep Etrigan in check, who does he call to roam through hell with? Lobo! **$1.75**

Detective #655
DC COMICS: The General continues to unite the gangs of Gotham as Batman tries to uncover the nature of this mystery man. **$1.25**

Doom 2099 #1
MARVEL: Latveria of 2099 is a slime pit of criminals led by Tiger Wylde, but Doctor Victor Von Doom has returned to claim his throne. **$1.75**

The Eternal Warrior #7
VALIANT: The relationship between the Geomancers and their Eternal Warrior is revealed as Gilad must kill and old friend. **$2.25**

Excelibur #60
MARVEL: Phoenix, having left the Earth, meets up with Galactus in deep space. Will they fight? **$1.75**

Ghost Rider #33
MARVEL: The insane Madcap turns Grand Central Station into a killing field! Ghost Rider must avenge the deaths of hundreds of innocents. **$1.75**

Harbinger #14
VALIANT: Sting and the renegade kids must once again defend themselves against Harada's forces. **$2.50**

MORE PICKS

Deathstroke #18

Ghost Rider #33

H.A.R.D. Corps #3
VALIANT: The Corps return home for some R&R as we see what Gunslinger and the crew do for fun on their days off. **$2.25**

Incredible Hulk #401
MARVEL: The Pantheon gets a new leader as the secrets of Agamemnon are revealed at last. **$1.25**

Iron Man #298
MARVEL: Rhodes takes on Atom Smasher and Firepower in this special anniversary issue **$2.50**

Justice League America #70
DC COMICS: Broken and badly injured, the League struggles to survive after the disastrous events in Superman #75 **$1.25**

L.E.G.I.O.N. '93 #49
DC COMICS: Ig'nea, the leader of the New Legion of Super-Villains, kidnaps Vril Dox's son after capturing Stealth! **$1.75**

The Mask Returns #3
DARK HORSE: At last! The untold origins of the Mask are revealed! Where did it come from, and who wants it back? $2 50

The New Titans #94
DC COMICS: Cyborg returns to Russia for a routine checkup, but someone from Red Star's past is waiting for him $1 75

New Warriors #31
MARVEL: Firestar, Cannonball and Warpath journey to Nova Roma to contact Empath and Magma, but they may discover X-Force's death! $1.25

Next Men #9
DARK HORSE: The Next Men discover that the Omega Project has a ghost from their past, and they have more in common than they expected **$2.50**

Operation: Urban Storm #1
IMAGE: The Image heroes take on the senseless violence of the Los Angeles riots in this Rebuild L.A. charity special **$1.95**

Predator vs Magnus Robot Fighter #2
DARK HORSE/VALIANT: The Predator and Magnus face off in the final battle for the helmet of the X-O Manowar armor. **$2.95**

Punisher War Zone #11
MARVEL: The Punisher has reduced the Magnificent Seven down to three, but they may be the three deadliest **$1.75**

Ravage 2099 #2
MARVEL: ECO strikes back at Ravage by ordering Deathstryk to kill Tiana and Dack, Ravage's closest friends! **$1.75**

Robin III: Cry of the Huntress #1
DC COMICS: Robin goes toe-to-toe with the KGBeast and gets some much-needed help from the Huntress. **$2.50**

Robin 3000 #1
DC COMICS: The Batman of the year 3000 is killed, and Robin of the time must fight Skulpt alone in the first non-Batman Elseworlds story. **$4.95**

RoboCop: Prime Suspect #2
DARK HORSE: ZED-309 was created to help RoboCop, but now they're being used to hunt him down! ZED-309, the last word in modern policing. **$2.50**

Sandman #75
DC COMICS: Delirium and Dream search for their lost sibling, Destruction, in the most unusual of places- a strip joint. **$1.75**

Shadowhawk #4
IMAGE: Savage Dragon is called to New York to put a stop to Shadowhawk's attacks, but the superpowered Blakjak may have something to say about it **$1.95**

New Titans #9

New Warriors #31

MORE PICKS

Shadowman #10
VALIANT: The deadly powers of Master D'Arque are increasing. How can Shadowman survive this new evil? **$2.50**

Silver Surfer #76
MARVEL: The Jack of Hearts is dying and it's up to the Surfer to help him, but when Nebula steps into the picture, can he do it? **$1.25**

Solar #18
VALIANT: Solar finds himself on the side of the spider aliens to defeat Aric and the X-O Manowar armor before it can reproduce. **$2.25**

Spawn #7
IMAGE: Spawn goes back to his military training instead of his superpowers to take on the Mafia superthug, Overkill. **$1.95**

Spider-Man 2099 #3
MARVEL: Miguel O'Hara struggles to keep his secret identity a secret as Venture tries to kill him. **$1.25**

Spirits of Vengeance #6
MARVEL: Can Ghost Rider and Blaze defend Spider Man from the evil of Demogoblin and Venom combined? **$1.75**

Superman: The Man of Steel #19
DC COMICS: Doomsday p5 of 6- Superman's climactic battle with Doomsday moves to the heart of Metropolis. **$1.25**

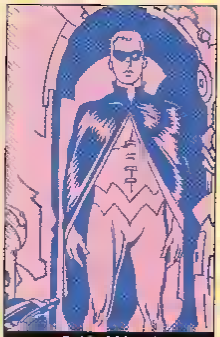
Supreme #3
IMAGE: When terrorists take over Dulles International Airport, Supreme arrives to save the day in a horribly brutal way. **$1.95**

Taam Titans #5
DC COMICS: It looks like the Titans aren't the only Team to come back from the future, and this new one starts their crime spree! **$1.75**

Uncanny X-Men #296
MARVEL: X-Cutioners Song p9 of 12- Apocalypse and the X-Men make an uneasy alliance to defeat Stryfe. **$1.50**

Supreme #3

X-Men Adventures #3


Robin 3000 #1

Superman, Man of Steel #19

Warlock & The Infinity Watch #12
MARVEL: Moondragon accidentally returns Drax's memory, which prompts him to return to the site of his death on Earth. **$1.75**

Web of Spider-Man #96
MARVEL: Ghost Rider, John Blaze, Spider-Man and Venom combine forces to face down the evil of the Demigoblin. **$1.25**

Wetworks #2
IMAGE: Team 7 has escaped from the Night Tribe but, now without homes, they must decide which side of the war to be on. **$1.95**

Wolverine #65
MARVEL: Logan gets pushed closer and closer to the edge as the pain he's suffering drives him mad. Can Professor X save him? **$1.75**

X-Factor #86
MARVEL: X-Cutioner's Song p10 of 12- When Stryfe is about to smash Cyclops and Marvel Girl, here comes Wolverine and Cable! **$1.50**

X-Force #18
MARVEL: X Cutioner's Song p12 of 12- Cable, Cyclops and Havok stand before Stryfe for the final battle. **$1.50**

X-Men #16
MARVEL: X-Cutioner's Song p11 of 12- Archangel takes on Apocalypse one-on-one as Stryfe releases the Dark Riders onto the X-Men! **$1.50**

X-Men Adventures #3
MARVEL: Magneto comes to town to pay his respects to the X-Men, with violence. Also, what is Wolverine's relationship to Sabretooth? **$1.25**

X-O Manowar #13
VALIANT: Aric agrees to fight without the armor with the X-O embryo as the prize. **$2.25**

The Wizard Of Cards

By Stephen Shamue

Hello again There's lots of new stuff on the way, so let's get right to it. Comic Images has planned a few new non-sports sets The first is a 90-card **Simon Bisley** set This set will feature his new character, Max Carnage. Preliminary plans call for the card set to create a 90-panel narrative Atoneka/Tundra will have full editorial control of the product. As in most Comic Images' sets, the set will have six prism cards randomly inserted into packs. They are also producing their last Marvel set, which will be a 72-card all prism series featuring the **Silver Surfer** The third upcoming set from Comic Images is a 90-card series featuring art from Jim Valentino's ***Shadowhawk.*** Again, there will be six randomly inserted prism cards Another set from Comic Images will be a **Globetrotter** series. This set will also contain 90 cards of the entire history of The Harlem Globetrotters And, yes, there will be six prism cards

The River Group (non-sports arm of Score) will be producing three 220-card sets of the "King," **Elvis Presley** These cards will be glossy UV-coated full bleed premium cards depicting Elvis throughout his career There are, of course, insert cards These will be 18 randomly inserted Elvis Gold Record cards This set is a must for every Elvis fan and collector.

Topps has plans for many new non-sport sets. The first is a series based on the film ***Home Alone II*** Their first non-sports release of 1993 should be **Nicktoons**, featuring animation art from *Ren & Stimpy*, *Rugrats*, and *Doug* With the enormous popularity of *Ren & Stimpy*, these cards should be a hit with collectors. Topps will also be releasing a series of cards entitled "**Star Wars Commemorative** " Topps will not reprint any of the cards from their previous Star Wars card series. In addition, Joe Jusko (*Deathlok*), will provide a series of painted cards for all the major characters of the *Star Wars* saga This should be super popular due to the fact that the *Star Wars* movies are among the most popular of all time.

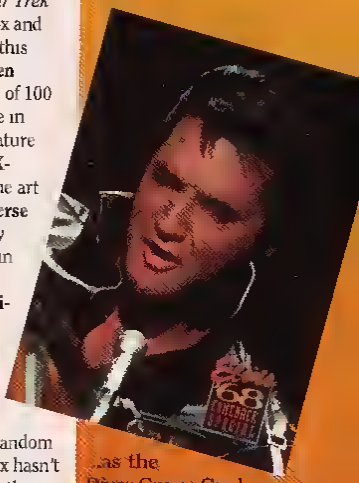
The final non-sports set announced by Topps will be ***Jurassic Park*** Topps will be producing comics, cards, and souvenir magazines for Steven Spielberg's film. With Spielberg at the helm, this movie should be a sure winner, and the cards won't be far behind.

SkyBox is also very busy with some new sets planned for the near future Firstly, SkyBox announced they will be producing a series of hand-painted ***Star Trek*** cards in May of 1993 These will be super premium cards (similar to the Marvel Masterworks), which will feature all original art painted by Joe Jusko The *Star Trek* cards will be limited and each box and case will be numbered to ensure this SkyBox will be releasing an **X-Men Series II** The series will consist of 100 cards and is scheduled for release in February of 1993 The set will feature original art by Marvel's current X-artists and will feature state-of-the art computer graphics **Marvel Universe Series IV** will also be provided by SkyBox and is slated for release in the summer of 1993

Lastly, a "super premium" **Spider-Man** series is due for release in the fall of 1993 from SkyBox. This may be the last Marvel card produced by SkyBox due to the recent Marvel Fleer merger All these sets will have random insert cards, and although SkyBox hasn't released any samples of these yet, they say these cards will be "awesome"

Take care, and see ya next month! ■

The King of Rock 'N' Roll comes to trading cards...



...as the River Group Card Company chronicles the life of Elvis Presley.

Trading cards in the price guide that are colored red (**like so**) have risen in price since last month's listing and trading cards that are colored blue (**like so**) have dropped in price since last month's listing

X-MEN™

TRADING CARDS

Randomly inserted in the 1992 SkyBox X Men trading cards were 2,500 limited edition signature cards signed by sat artist Jim Lee. Each card has an authentic stamp to verify it's authenticity. These autographed cards are valued between $115 and $130

FULL SET $14 00
Unopened box $18 00
Capital City's Magneto H grm $6 50

HOLOGRAMS

5 CARD HOLOGRAM SET .. $21 50
H 1 Wolverine 5 50
H 2 Cable 5 50
H 3 Gambit 4 75
H-4 Magneto 4 75
H 5 The X Men 4 75

HEROES

1 Beast 15
2 Wolverine 25
3 Havok 20
4 Iceman 15
5 Phoenix 15
6 Nightcrawler 15
7 Cannonball 15
8 Wolfsbane 15
9 Siryn 15
10 Lockheed 15
11 Professor X 20
12 Psylocke 20
13 Domino 20
14 Storm 15
15 Meggan 15
16 Feral 20
17 Cyclops 25
18 Gambit 25
19 Cable 25
20 Archangel 25
21 Banshee 20
22 Shadowcat 15
23 Kylun 15
24 Jean Grey 20
25 Colossus 25
26 Warpath 25
27 Polaris 15
28 Boom Boom 15
29 Jubilee 15
30 Shatterstar 25
31 Strong Guy 15
32 Captain Britain 15
33 Forge 20
34 Multiple Man 15
35 Quicksilver 15
36 Rogue 25
37 Widget 15
38 Bishop 25
39 Maverick 15
40 Cerise 15

VILLAINS

41 Magneto 25
42 Mr Sinister 15
43 Deadpool 25
44 Proteus 15
45 Mojo 2 15
46 Juggernaut 20
47 Sentinels 20
48 Gideon 15
49 Masque 15
50 Shiva 15
51 Apocalypse 20
52 Sabretooth 25
53 Mojo 15
54 Caliban 15
55 Gatecrasher 15
56 Brood 15
57 Blob 15
58 Stryfe 20
59 Warwolves 15
60 Omega Red 25
61 Black Tom 15
62 Mystique 20
63 Sauron 15
64 Saturnyne 15
65 Toad 15
66 Shadow King 20
67 White Queen 15
68 Mastermind 15
69 Deathbird 20
70 Lady Deathstrike 20

TEAMS

71 X Men Gold 25
72 X Men Blue 25
73 X-Factor 20
74 X-Force 25
75 Excalibur 20
76 Hellfire Club 15
77 Mutant Liberation Front 20
78 Brotherhood/Evil Mutants 15
79 Upstarts 15
80 Technet 15

EX-X MEN

81 Sunspot 20
82 Dark Phoenix 20
83 Longshot 25
84 Magik 15
85 Dazzler 15

ALLIES

86 Starjammers 15
87 Imperial Guard 15
88 Lilandra 15
89 W H O 15
90 Roma 15

DANGER ROOM

91 Nightcrawler 10
92 Archangel 10
93 Storm 10
94 Gambit 15
95 Wolverine 20
96 Shatterstar 10
97 Cyclops 10
98 Cable 20
99 Colossus 10

CHECKLIST

100 Checklist/Cerebro 25

ARTHUR ADAMS
1989 COMIC IMAGES
Full Set $13 00
Cards per set 45
Price Range per card 25 to 50

EXCALIBUR
1989 COMIC IMAGES
Full Set $11 00
Cards per set 45
Price Range per card 20 to 40

JOHN BYRNE
1989 COMIC IMAGES
Full Set $12.00
Cards per set 45
Price Range per card 25 to 40

McFARLANE ERA SPIDER-MAN
1992 COMIC IMAGES
Full Set $10.00
Cards per set 90
Price Range per card 10 to 20
P 1 Thirty Years 16.00
P 2 Dynamic 16 00
P 3 Number One 16 00
P 4 Impact 16 00
P 5 Image 16 00
P 6 Red & Blue 16 00

MIKE ZECK
1989 COMIC IMAGES
Full Set $12.00
Cards per set 45
Price Range per card 25 to 35

THE PUNISHER
1988 COMIC IMAGES
Full Set $12 00
Cards per set 50
Price Range per card 20 to 30

STAR TREK SERIES I
1991 IMPEL
Full Set $24 50
Cards per set 160
Price Range per card 10 to 50
H 1 Kirk's Enterprise 29 00
H 2 Picard's Enterprise 27 00

STAR TREK SERIES II
1991 IMPEL
Full Set $16 00
Cards per set 150
Price Range per card 05 to 30
H-3 Captain Kirk 17 00
H-4 Jean Luc Picard 25 00

TODD McFARLANE SERIES I
1989 COMIC IMAGES
Full Set $14 00
Cards per set 45
Price Range per card 25 to 80

TODD McFARLANE SERIES II
1990 COMIC IMAGES
Full Set $12 00
Cards per set 45
Price Range per card 25 to 50

WOLVERINE
1988 COMIC IMAGES
Full Set $13 50
Cards per set 50
Price Range per card 20 to 60

X-FORCE
1991 COMIC IMAGES
Full Set $15 00
Cards per set 90
Price Range per card 10 to 30

Card shown at above left is Mike Zeck #58, "Butun Out," valued at $.25

MARVEL UNIVERSE™

THE OFFICIAL TRADING CARDS OF THE MARVEL SUPER HEROES®

SERIES I

FULL SET.....$40 00
Unopened box $90 00
Previews uncut sheet .. $25 00

HOLOGRAMS

5 CARD HOLOGRAM SET .. $50 00
MH-1 Cosmic Spider-Man 11 00
MH-2 Magneto 11.00
MH 3 Silver Surfer 11 00
MH-4 Wolverine 11 00
MH 5 SpM vs Green Goblin 11 00

SUPER HEROES

1 Captain America 35
2 Spider-Man (black costume) 45
3 Hulk 35
4 Daredevil 25
5 Nick Fury 25
6 Thing 25
7 Professor X. 50
8 Cyclops 45
9 Marvel Girl 45
10 Wolverine 1 25
11 Phoenix 30
12 Power Man 30
13 Dazzler 25
14 Dagger 25
15 Quasar 25
16 Sub-Mariner 30
17 Hulk (gray) 30
18 Thor 25
19 Mr Fantastic 25
20 Black Panther 25
21 Archangel 60
22 Iceman 45
23 Wolverine (long costume) 1 25
24 Storm 35
25 Shadowcat 25
26 Moon Knight 25
27 Lockheed 25
28 Aunt May 25
29 Spider-Man 85
30 Cosmic Spider Man 50
31 Capt America's Motorcycle 25
32 Silver Surfer 1 00
33 Human Torch 25
34 Dr Strange 25
35 Havok 60
36 Colossus 60
37 Wolverine (patch) 55
38 Nightcrawler 35
39 She-Hulk 30
40 Captain Britain 30
41 Rogue 50
42 Iron Man 25
43 Invisible Woman 25
44 Punisher's Van 25
45 Long Shot 45
46 Beast 35
47 Punisher 40
48 Storm (old costume) 30
49 Elektra 25
50 Cloak 25
51 Wasp 25

SUPER VILLAINS

52 Kingpin 25
53 Baron Zemo 25
54 Loki 25
55 Juggernaut 40
56 Nightmare 25
57 Sabretooth 1 00
58 Electro 50
59 Dr Octopus 25
60 Dr Doom 25
61 Ultron 25
62 Enchantress 25
63 Magneto 75
64 Bullseye 25
65 Mr Sinister 30
66 Sandman 25
67 Lizard 25
68 Mole Man 25
69 Dormammu 25
70 Leader 25
71 Blob 25
72 Black Cat 25
73 Venom 1 25
74 Green Goblin 30
75 Galactus 40
76 Mandarin 30
77 High Evolutionary 25
78 Mephisto 25
79 Thanos 1 25
80 Apocalypse 25
81 Red Skull 25

ROOKIES

82 Ghost Rider 2 50
83 Deathlok 1 00
84 Guardians of The Galaxy 50
85 New Warriors 50
86 Nomad 50
87 Foolkiller 40

FAMOUS BATTLES

88 Hulk vs Thing 25
89 Fantastic Four vs Galactus 25
90 Fantastic Four Dr Doom 25
91 Thor vs Surfer 25
92 Spider Man vs Kraven 25
93 Spider Man vs Doc Ock 25
94 Daredevil vs Bullseye 25
95 Daredevil vs Kingpin 25
96 Silver Surfer vs Mephisto 25
97 Capt America vs Red Skull 25
98 Dark Phoenix 25
99 X Men vs Avengers 25
100 X Men vs Magneto 25
101 Fantastic Four vs X Men 25
102 Fall of the Mutants 25
103 Evolutionary Wars 25
104 Atlantis Attacks 25
105 Acts of Vengance 25
106 Spider-Man vs Venom 30
107 Nick Fury vs Hydra 25
108 Armor Wars 30
109 Daredevil vs Wolverine 25
110 Daredevil vs Punisher 25
111 Spider-Man vs Gr Goblin 25
112 Spider-Man vs Hobgoblin 25
113 Hulk vs Wolverine 25
114 Hulk vs Spider-Man 25
115 Capt. America vs Wolv 30
116 Surfer vs Thanos 60
117 X-Factor vs Apocalypse 25
118 X-Men vs Freedom Force 25
119 Wolverine vs Sabretooth 40
120 X-Men in Savage Land 25
121 Iron Man vs Titanium Man 25
122 Thor vs Loki 25
123 Kree/Skrull War 25

MOST VALUABLE COMICS

124 Fantastic Four #1 25
125 X-Men #1 25
126 Amazing Fantasy #15 30
127 Punisher #1 25
128 Journey into Mystery #83 25
129 Amazing Spider Man #1 25
130 Avengers #1 25
131 Amazing Spider-Men #1 25
132 Giant-Size X-Men #1 30
133 Wolverine Ltd Series #1 30
134 Incredible Hulk #181 30
135 Tales of Suspense #39 25
136 Avengers #4 25

TEAM PICTURES

137 Fantastic Four 25
138 Avengers 25
139 X Men 30
140 X Men (old team) 30
141 Cloak & Dagger 25
142 New Mutants 30
143 X-Factor 30
144 Excalibur 25
145 Brotherhd of Evil Mutants 25
146 Sinister Six 25
147 Hellfire Club 25
148 Alpha Flight 25

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149 Spider Man 25
150 Dr Doom 25
151 Doc Ock 25
152 Hulk 25
153 Silver Surfer 25
154 Thor 25
155 Punisher 25
156 Magneto 25
157 Captain America 25
158 Dr Strange 25
159 Iron Man 25
160 Wolverine 25

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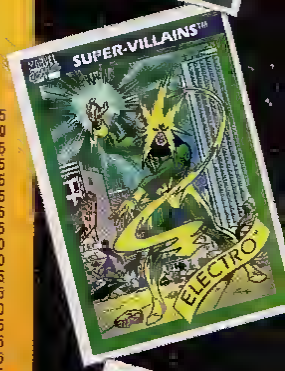
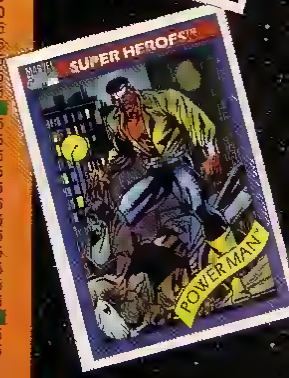
161 Stan Lee 25
162 Checklist 35





MARVEL UNIVERSE™

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SERIES II

FULL SET	**$21.00**
Unopened box	$40.00
Previews uncut sheet	$18.00
X-FORCE	
5 CARD X-FORCE SUBSET	**$12.00**
1 Cable	4.50
2 Shatter Star	2.75
3 Deadpool	2.50
4 Sunspot & Gideon	2.50
5 Team	3.50
HOLOGRAMS	
5 CARD HOLOGRAM SET	**$40.00**
H-1 Spider Man	10.00
H-2 Hulk	7.00
H-3 Punisher	10.00
H-4 Dr. Doom	10.00
H-5 F.F. vs The Mole Man	8.00
SUPER-HEROES	
1 Spider Man	.30
2 Daredevil	.20
3 Thing	.15
4 Marvel Girl	.30
5 Phoenix	.25
6 Namor	.20
7 Mr. Fantastic	.15
8 Iceman	.30
9 Shadowcat	.20
10 Human Torch	.15
11 Nightcrawler	.20
12 Capt. Britain	.20
13 Iron Man	.20
14 Punisher	.25
15 Cable	.85
16 Deathlok	.30
17 Gambit	.60
18 Psylocke	.25
19 Vision	.15
20 Hawkeye	.15
21 Silver Sable	.20
22 Night Thrasher	.20
23 Puck	.15
24 Union Jack	.15
25 Quicksilver	.20
26 Scarlet Witch	.15
27 Havok	.25
28 Iron Fist	.20
29 Adam Warlock	.50
30 Wonder Man	.20
31 Sasquatch	.15
32 Firestar	.20
33 Death's Head	.20
34 Speedball	.20
35 U.S. Agent	.20
36 Banshee	.20
37 Meggan	.20
38 Jubilee	.20
39 Ghost Rider	.75
40 Beast	.20
41 Invisible Woman	.15
42 Rogue	.30
43 She-Hulk	.20
44 Dr. Strange	.20
45 Silver Surfer	.35
46 Storm	.20
47 Archangel	.50
48 Thor	.20
49 Quasar	.20
50 Wolverine	.60
51 Cyclops	.20
52 Nick Fury	.20
53 Hulk	.20
54 Captain America	.20
SUPER-VILLAINS	
55 Kingpin	.15
56 Sabretooth	.50
57 Magneto	.25
58 Venom	.60
59 Galactus	.25
60 Mandarin	.15
61 Chameleon	.15
62 Super Skrull	.15
63 Grim Reaper	.15
64 Mojo	.20
65 Fin Fang Foom	.15
66 Jigsaw	.20
67 Tombstone	.20
68 Ulik	.15
69 Baron Strucker	.15
70 Mysterio	.15
71 Sauron	.20
72 Amphibius	.15
73 Rhino	.15
74 Absorbing Man	.20
75 Dr. Octopus	.20
76 Baron Mordo	.15
77 Sarracin	.20
78 Nebula	.15
79 Puma	.20
80 Deathwatch	.20
81 Kang	.15
82 Blackout	.20
83 Calypso	.15
84 Ultron	.15
85 Thanos	.50
86 Hobgoblin	.30
87 Lizard	.15
88 Dr. Doom	.20
89 Loki	.15
90 Red Skull	.15
ARCH-ENEMIES	
91 Spider-Man/Venom	.30
92 Fantastic Four/Skrull	.15
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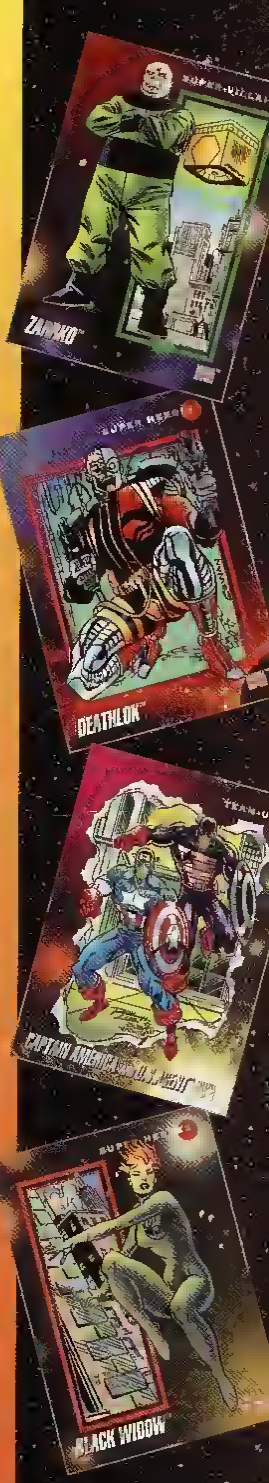

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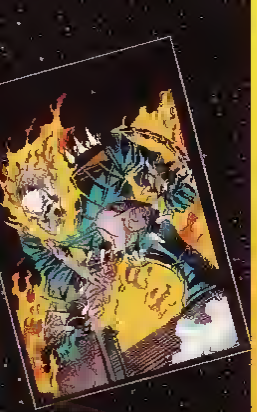

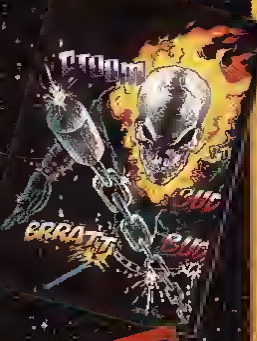

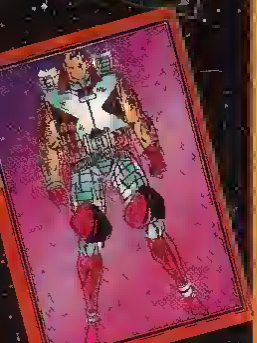

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HERE LIES

HERE LIES EARTH'S GREATEST HERO

SUPERMAN #75

ON SALE NOV. 20

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TOYING around · around · around · around

WITH BRIAN CUNNINGHAM

In case you didn't purchase it, (and shame on you if you didn't) the *1992 Wizard Special Edition* had a six-page spread of homemade figures, including "Toy Tips" on how to get started on your own. At the time that I was putting it together, I thought it was a pretty neat idea (courtesy of our very own Pat McCallum) and would be a pleasant change of pace from the rest of the Special's contents. It seems that you, the faithful readers, wholeheartedly agreed.

The response was terrific. Even people who never looked at this column or (shudder) hated it said they enjoyed the ingenuity involved in creating a new figure out of an old one. So, this issue, I'm going to display a few more figures than normal, and suspend the "Figure of the Month" rules until next month.

Thanks to everyone who responded and to those who continue to do so. Whether you're a constant reader or a new one-stick around. We may surprise you.

NEWS

Just when you thought it was a "no-go", it seems there will be Aliens figures out on the market. Reported to me by Wizard's Andy Mangels, there are commercials promoting them in his home state of Oregon. Hopefully, they're in your neighborhood too.

Although this isn't a toy, I felt fans out there should know that Macross II model kits are coming to the U.S. Call your local toy dealers to see if they are available.

PRICE GUIDE SNEAK PEEK

Did you know the market value of Kenner's Catwoman is about $20? Did you also know that the Toy Biz Daredevil is no longer being made? He's almost impossible to find nowadays and could easily be sold at $25. If you find either of these two, keep'em.

MAIL

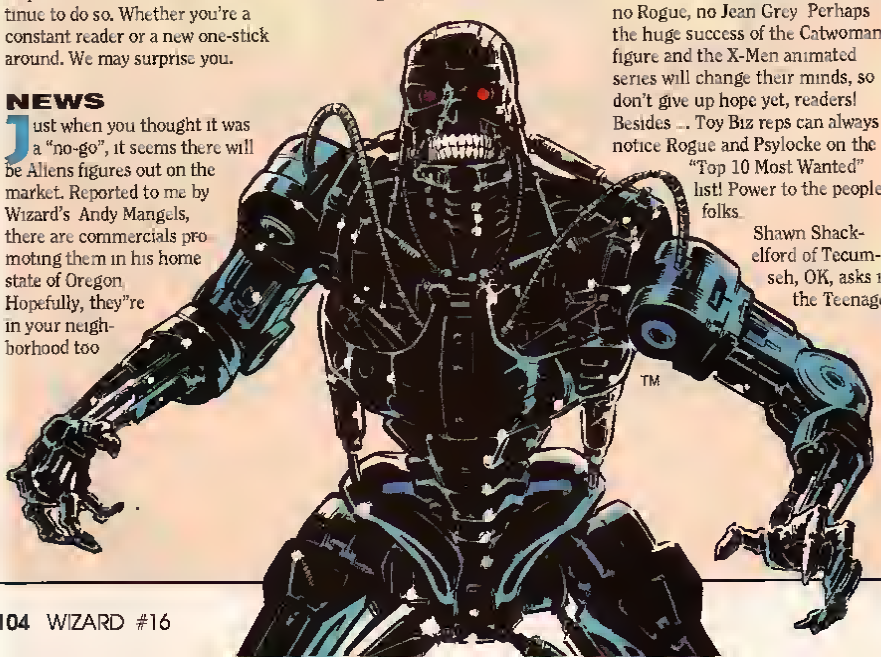
Jamie Hypes of Bluefield, WV asks two whoppers of a question:

1) Why is Catwoman not on the back of any *Batman Returns* packaging? 2) Why are there so few female figures?

The first question is easy, Jamie. The reason why Catwoman is not on the back is that when the packaging was being designed, there wasn't a model photo available for Catwoman. Catwoman was shipping a lot later than most of the figures on the card. The packaging is designed at the same time the figures are, so both are ready to be shipped at the same time. Of course, because of the lack of female figures, Kenner did not want to screw up the opportunity to make one, so they took a lot more time to craft her, as opposed to Robin.

Your second question, though, isn't as simple. Perhaps Ricky L. Ross of Houston, TX, can help. Ricky had spoken to a woman at Toy Biz who said that Toy Biz will be making no more female figures for the X-Men line because Storm sold poorly. Imagine: no Psylocke, no Rogue, no Jean Grey. Perhaps the huge success of the Catwoman figure and the X-Men animated series will change their minds, so don't give up hope yet, readers! Besides ... Toy Biz reps can always notice Rogue and Psylocke on the "Top 10 Most Wanted" list! Power to the people, folks.

Shawn Shackelford of Tecumseh, OK, asks if the Teenage



THE TERMINATOR™ 1992 CARDLOO. ARTWORK © 1992 DARK HORSE COMICS

He is the LAW! And if you don't believe that, then believe he is the creation of Rob Herbert of Wilmington, NC. Judge Dredd was originally a Toy Biz Batman

Mutant Ninja Turtles will be worth anything. It's a very good bet that they will, Shawn. All of the Turtles figures are nicely crafted and are identical likenesses of their Turtle comic-book counterparts. Give them some time to go up in price. My best guess is that they'll be moving up in price in a few years. History has proven that sharp-looking figures, no matter how abundant in stock, should ultimately rise in price. Just look at Mego and Super Powers. It only took a few years for them to soar. TMNT may be the same way someday.

Shawn Cooper of Denver, CO, works at a toy store and gets a pretty good idea of what's hot and what's not. What's hot? Toy Biz's Silver Surfer, Spider-Man, Archangel, Apocalypse, Wolverine, and Juggernaut. What's not? Toy Biz Hulk, punisher, Magneto, Storm, and Nightcrawler. By the way, Shawn - I liked the bribe. Keep in touch!

The Savage Dragon, a super-cop and all-around tough guy, comes straight from Marvin Monroe of Highlands, TX, and was formerly a Super Powers Shazam

This cerv version of the Spectre is from David Rosenberg of Brooklyn, NY, and was made from a Secret Wars Dr. Doom head and S.W. Magneto body

MORE NEWS

With the apparent success of the Terminator 2 line, Kenner just might make a Sarah Connor figure. However, it is not definite. Yet. (You can rest assured, though, that there is a Ripley figure for the Aliens line. How dumb would it be if there wasn't?)

Speaking of Kenner, they have the license to an upcoming Steven Spielberg film, *Jurassic Park*. The film will be about scientists who recreate dinosaurs! Based on Michael Crichton's novel, this film will be released next summer. Oh, and for the record, Ed Devenish of Fayetteville, NC, told me he called Kenner and they told him that there is no Max Schreck figure. It seems my source was wrong. I don't know about you, but I'm kinda relieved. I looked *everywhere* for the dang figure!

This is what we're looking for! The beautiful Psylocke hails from X-fan Ben Wong of Hillsborough, CA and was originally a Storm figure

BEFORE I GO...

I'd like to make a few announcements. First off, next issue we'll see the return of our quarterly price guide! A few things'll be updated and revised, and it will sport a new look.

Second, I've been assured of a spot in an upcoming Wizard Special Edition, due out sometime in '93. It will be bigger than the last one, so start sending your figures now!

Speaking of figures. I'm still receiving blurry photos! I hate to see such awesome figures being cheated of getting printed due to the unclearness of the photo. So, I'm begging you to send sharp photos.

That's all for this month folks! Thanks for reading. ■

Ghost Rider, America's favorite vengeance seeker, is a product of Anthony Michael Diaz of San Lorenzo, CA and was made from a Battle Damage Terminator

JUDGE DREDD © FLEETWAY/QUALITY. PSYLOCKE AND GHOST RIDER © MARVEL. SPECTRE © DC COMICS. SAVAGE DRAGON © ERIK LARSEN.

WIZARD Contest

Grand Prize:

An autographed set of Image's first books: *Youngblood* #1, *Spawn* #1, *Savage Dragon* #1, *WildC.A.T.s* #1, and *Shadowhawk* #1, all signed by their creators!

First Prizes (3):

A gold Savage Dragon trading card, or a gold Shadowhawk trading card! *YOUR CHOICE*!

Second Prizes (6):

A set of *Wizard* #1-12 plus our first Special Edition, or a one year subscription to *Wizard: The Guide To Comics*! *YOUR CHOICE*!

Third Prizes (15):

A set of the Image/Wizard prism trading cards (#1-10) or a copy of *Amazing Spider-Man* #344 (the first appearance of Cletus "Carnage" Kasady!) *YOUR CHOICE*!

Holy Crap Alert!!!

Don't forget, the second half of the Wizard Contest started in the pages of *Wizard* #13 will be in the pages of Image Press' *Cyberforce* #2, on sale now. What's the prize so staggering that it had to be given away with the help of two (count 'em, two) books? Why, it's an all-expense-paid trip for two to sunny Trenton, New Jersey...no, wait...that's next month. Hold on a sec...okay, the Grand Prize for the *Wizard* #13/*Cyberforce* #2 contest is an all-expense-paid trip to really sunny San Diego, California, to spend a day with Marc "Cyberforce" Silvestri, Jim Lee, Whilce Portacio and Scott Williams over at Homage Studios! Very cool stuff. Winners will be announced in just a few short months, so get cracking!

Scavanger Hunt: Did you enter? Did you *WIN*? Check out page 186 and see!

№16

1 Hot babe from *Brigade*

2 Didn't like Al in *WildC A T s #1*

3 Rob's buttoned jeans

4 Same as Kiss's Gene

5 The bigger he gets, the dumber he gets

6 He's got the Punisher's chest on his face

Enter Now To Win!

Official 1992 WIZARD Contest #16

YES, enter me in the 1992 Wizard 'Image' contest for a chance to win a set of all of Image's #1 issues, signed by their respective creators!

Name (please print clearly) Age

Phone #

Home Address

City State Zip

Store Name

Address

Entry Form

1st Prize Choice check one
- ☐ Savage Dragon card
- ☐ Shadowhawk card

2nd Prize Choice check one
- ☐ *Wizard* #1-12
- ☐ 1 year subscription

3rd Prize Choice check one
- ☐ Image card set
- ☐ *Amazing Spidey* #344

Image Code:

Wizard Clue: The Image Guys' Old Neighborhood

Contest Rules

Answer the questions in the boxes supplied. In each answer you will find a circled letter. After you have completed all the questions, the circled letters from the answers, when unscrambled, will form the Contest Code Word. Write this word on the official entry form supplied below or a 3x5 index card.

No purchase necessary. Contest is open to anyone except employees of Wizard Press, their immediate families, and Dan Quayle.

Print your name, address, city, state, zip code, telephone number with area code, and the name of the store where you purchase your comics, and the Image Code on an "Official Entry Form" or a standard postcard. Enter as many times as you like. Mail each entry individually to "Image Code #15," P.O. Box 648, Nanuet, NY 10954-0648. No mechanical reproductions will be accepted. All entries become property of Wizard Press and none will be returned. All taxes (federal, state, and local, if any) will be the responsibility of the prize winners. No cash equivalent or substitute prizes are offered. The prizes will be awarded in the name of the prize winners and are not transferable. Only one prize winner per household. Offer void where prohibited, regulated or restricted by law in a manner inconsistent with the purpose and rules hereof.

All entries must be postmarked by December 24, 1992 and received at contest headquarters by December 25, 1992. Wizard Press is not responsible for lost, late, misdirected or mutilated entries.

Odds of winning will be determined by the number of valid entries received prior to the closing date of the contest. The prize winners will be selected in a random drawing from all properly completed entry forms received at contest headquarters. The random drawing will be conducted on December 26, 1992 by Wizard Press. One (1) grand prize: *Spawn* #1 (autographed by Todd McFarlane), *Savage Dragon* #1 (by Erik Larsen), *Youngblood* #1 (by Rob Liefeld), *WildC.A.T.s* #1 (by Jim Lee) and *Shadowhawk* #1 (by Jim Valentino). Three (3) first prizes-a gold Wizard Savage Dragon trading card or gold Wizard Shadowhawk trading card (winner's choice). Six (6) second prizes: a set of *Wizard* #1-12 and the Special Edition or a one-year subscription (12 issues) (winner's choice). Fifteen (15) third prizes- a set of Wizard's Image trading cards (#1-10) or *Amazing Spider-Man* #344.

For a list of winners, which will be available after February 1, 1992, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to "Image Winners," P.O. Box 648, Nanuet, NY 10954-0648.

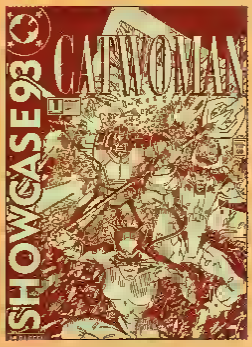
SEND TO:
IMAGE CODE #16
P.O. BOX 648
NANUET, NY 10954-0648

This Month's Number ONES

Comic book collectors place a great deal of importance on the #1 issues. Since it's tricky to determine whether a book will succeed, you have to choose your comics very carefully and wisely. #1 issues have been known to appreciate considerably when a series becomes very popular. Here we have compiled for you all the #1 issues shipping for November. Happy Hunting!

Anne Rice's Witching Hour #1 from Millennium

Doom 2099 #1 from Marvel



Showcase '93 #1 from DC Comics

Anne Rice's The Witching Hour #1
Millennium

Attitude Lad #1
Iconografix

Batman: Vengeance of Bane Special #1
DC Comics

Black Canary #1
DC Comics

Black Commando: Dark Dynamo #1
AC Comics

Bloodshot #1
Valiant

Bloodstorm #1
Phoenix

Deadworld Archives #1
Caliber

Doom 2099 #1
Marvel

Ex-Mutants #1
Malibu

The Incomplete Death's Head #1
Marvel

Knight Stalkers #1
Phoenix

New World Order #1
Blazer Studios

Nightlife Special #1
Iconografix

Pendulum #1
Adventure

Pitt #1
Image

Ring of Roses #1
Dark Horse

Robin 3000 #1
DC Comics

Savage Dragon vs Megaton Man #1
Image

Scarlett #1
DC Comics

Showcase '93 #1
DC Comics

Sonic The Hedgehog #1
Archie

Space Patrol #1
Adventure

Splitting Image #1
Image

Stryfe's Strike File #1
Marvel

Tarzan: The Beconing #1
Malibu

Team Helix #1
Marvel

TMNT Mutant Universe Sourcebook #1
Archie

Time Killers #1
Fleetway/Quality

TOP 100 OCTOBER - 1992

Here's the list for October...the countdown of the top selling titles sold as reported by Diamond Comic Distributors, Inc.

1 WetWorks #1
2 X-Men #15
3 Ravage 2099 #1
4 Uncanny X-Men #295
5 X-Force #17
6 Spider-Man 2099 #2
7 Spawn #6
8 X-Factor #85
9 Silver Surfer #75
10 Incredible Hulk #400
11 Death's Head II #1
12 Predator vs Magnus #1
13 Cyberforce #3
14 Supreme #2
15 Shadowhawk #3
16 Robin III #1 (Dir Mkt)
17 Brigade #4
18 Spider-Man #29
19 Web of Spider-Man #95
20 Spirits of Vengeance #5
21 Wolverine #64
22 Battletide #1
23 Amazing Spider-Man #371
24 Ghost Rider #32
25 Amazing Spider-Man #370
26 X-Men: The Animated Series #2
27 Fantastic Four #371
28 Dracula #1
29 Morbius #4
30 Lobo: Infanticide #3
31 Ren & Stimpy #1
32 Nightstalkers #2
33 Shadow of the Bat #7
34 Punisher War Zone #10
35 Star Wars: Dark Empire #6
36 Shadow of the Bat #6
37 Warlock and the Infinity Watch #11
38 Darkhold #3
39 Spectre #1
40 Sword of Azrael #3
41 Legends of the Dark Knight #40
42 Night Thrasher #3
43 New Warriors #30
44 Punisher #73
45 Excalibur #58
46 Excalibur #59
47 H.A.R.D. Corps #2
48 Marvel Comics Presents #117
49 Darkhawk #22
50 Spectacular Spider-Man #195
51 Ghost Rider: Fear
52 What If? #44
53 Marvel Comics Presents #118
54 Silver Sable #7
55 Terminator: Endgame #2
56 Digitek #1
57 Guardians of the Galaxy #31
58 Next Men #8
59 Punisher War Journal #49
60 Batman #487
61 Terminator: Endgame #2
62 Nomad #8
63 Robin III #1 (Newsstnd)
64 Thor #455
65 Thor #456
66 Iron Man #287
67 Batman Adventures #3
68 Detective Comics #654
69 Captain America #410
70 Spectacular Spider-Man #195
71 Deathstroke the Terminator #17
72 Robocop: Prime Suspect #1
73 Daredevil #311
74 Team Titans #4
75 Sandman #44
76 Titans Sell-Out Special #1
77 Superman: Man of Steel #18
78 Avengers #357
79 Namor #33
80 New Titans #93
81 Superman #74
82 Solar #17
83 Deathlok #18
84 X-O Manowar #12
85 Grendel: War Child #3
86 Alpha Flight #115
87 Eclipso #2
88 Sleepwalker #19
89 Avengers West Coast #89
90 Adventures of Superman #497
91 Action Comics #684
92 Justice League America #69
93 Blood & Glory #3
94 Archer & Armstrong #6
95 Cage #9
96 Harbinger #13
97 Warheads #7
98 Eternal Warrior #6
99 Guy Gardner #3
100 Justice League Europe #45

Who's in the TOP 100?

	# books in top 10	# books in top 50	# books in top 100
Marvel	8 (+1)	33 (-2)	56 (-6)
DC Comics	- (+0)	7 (+0)	24 (-2)
Image	2 (-1)	6 (+0)	6 (+0)
Dark Horse	- (+0)	2 (+1)	7 (+3)
Voliant	- (+0)	1 (+0)	6 (+4)
Topps	- (+0)	1 (+1)	1 (+1)

(+or - indicates change from last month's listings)

TOP 10 OCTOBER 1991

1 Robin: The Joker's Wild #1 (Dir Mkt)
2 X-Men #3
3 X-Force #5
4 Uncanny X-Men #283
5 Spider-Man #17
6 Infinity Gauntlet #6
7 X-Factor #73
8 Robin: The Joker's Wild #1 (Newsstnd)
9 Ghost Rider #20
10 Deathlok #5

TOP 10 NOVEMBER - 1992

We keep a very close watch on all the hottest books changing hands throughout the country. Here are the 10 best-selling comics:

Rai #0

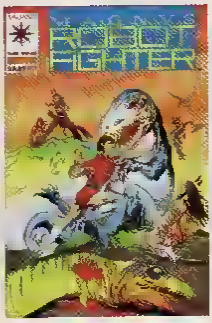
Artist: David Lapham
Writer: Bob Layton

© VALIANT

If nothing else, that's a really cool cover. But since this isn't the "Wizard's Top Ten Coolest Covers," there's got to be more to it than that, yes? Yes. This also happens to be one of the coolest books Valiant has ever put out. It chronicles the entire future of the Valiant universe, and features the gruesome deaths of X-O and Bloodshot, as well as the final fates of Solar, The H.A.R.D. Corps and the Harbinger Foundation. Really cool stuff. Though the print run wasn't super limited, the existing copies were snatched up quicker than a tribble scoffs quadrotriticale. On top of that, it's also the origin and first appearance of the new (and last) Rai, soon to be the star of the *Rai* comic, starting with #9 and retitled *Rai And The Future Force.*

Magnus: Robot Fighter #12

Artist: Gonzalo Moyo
Writer: Faye Perozich



© VALIANT

Moving up three notches over last month's ranking, the mighty "Squee-Meister" has secured the prestigious honor of being the second hottest book in the country. Why is it so hot? Simple. The mighty Turok (most excellent dinosaur hunter) makes his first Valiant appearance in these pages. With dinosaurs becoming a hot property nowadays (Walt Simonson is smiling) and the rather limited print run (try and find one), *Magnus* #12 is becoming one very hot property. Hmmm, I know I'm forgetting something... Ah! Turok will also be getting his own monthly title sometime in '93. Put that in your peace pipe and smoke it.

Eternal Warrior #5

Artist: John Dixon
Writer: Kevin VanHook

© VALIANT

They steal. They shoot. They score!! Yes, the mighty Valiant bags a hat trick here in the Wizard top ten. Can you buy stock in these guys? Anyway, the big news on the street is this new dude Bloodshot. With his first appearance being in *E.W.* #4, why is this book, the issue after the event, so darn popular? Simple. His first appearance was pretty cheesy. He only appeared on the last page, and though it was hot when it came out, the fan focus shifted to *E.W.* #5 because instead of only showing up in one caption (like *E.W.* #4), Bloodshot is in the whole enchelada... The fact that *Bloodshot* #1 just hit the stands with its awesome chromium cover might also have something to do with it.

Amazing Spider-Man #101

Artist: Gil Kane
Writer: Roy Thomas

© MARVEL

Ah... a non-Valiant book. For a second there I thought Steve Massarsky had taken control of the Top Ten. "A Monster Called... Morbius." Pretty spooky, huh? Regardless of whether or not this Dracula-wannabe scares you, he's heating up back issue sales like crazy. Even with a price tag of almost $200, mint copies of this book are impossible to keep in stock. The big deal about this issue is that it's the first appearance of the aforementioned fanged dude, who is receiving a tremendous amount of fan attention thanks to his new monthly series as well as the high profile Rise of The Midnight Sons crossover storyline from a few months back.

5 Harbinger #10

Artist: David Lapham
Writer: David Lapham

Maybe Steve Massarsky is behind the Top Ten after all. Aside from being one of those "Hey, printed on gold Valiant books," it's also the one book that has H.A.R.D. Corps material in it that you don't have to be over 18 to buy. (For all you parents out there that just had a coronary, relax. That's H.A.R.D. Corps, not hardcore. Geez, people are so touchy these days.) On to the matter at hand. That really cool comic that came out a couple of months back, *H.A.R.D. Corps* #1, wasn't that team's first appearance. They first showed up in this here little diddy, *Harbinger* #10, where they did their best to put the big kibosh on those wacky Harbinger kids.

© VALIANT

6 Amazing Spider-Man #361

Artist: Mark Bagley
Writer: David Michelinie

Valiant. Marvel. Valiant. Marvel... will it never end? This see-saw battle between these two powerhouse companies to see who has the hotter back issues. All the senseless loss of life, the mindless destruction, oh the horror, the horror!... Sorry, just thought a little dramatic writing might spruce things up a bit. Anyway, what's the big deal with this book, you ask? If you don't already know, you've either been living in a cave for the past six months or you're a complete moron. Or both. The big news here is the first complete appearance of Carnage, the hottest asexually reproduced extraterrestrial parasitic set of longjohns this side of... of... by golly, for the first time I'm at a loss for an analogy. Darn. Ah well, the book is hot.

© MARVEL

7 Shadowman #8

Artist: Yvel Guichet
Writer: Bob Hall

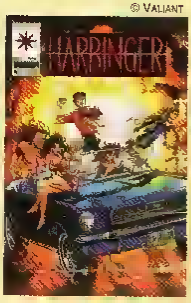
Now that's odd, a Valiant here in the Top Ten list. Something must be amiss. We'll look into it later. So what, you say, is so great about *Shadowman* #8? For starters, it's a really neat story. Like the majority of Valiants titles, this was a really good read. Aside from that, this is also the first appearance of Master Darque, the first major Valiant bad guy if you don't count that Erica Pierce chick from "Unity" that is. Already causing trouble for our bud Shadowman, rumor has it that Master Darque is going to be the major villain in the crossover Valiant has planned for the summer of '93. Also keep your eyes open for this little tattooed bugger as he pops up all over the Valiant universe.

© VALIANT

8 Harbinger #1

Artist: Dave Lapham
Writer: Jim Shooter

Sliding just a little bit from last months standing, the super-under-printed *Harbinger* #1 (less than 40,000 copies out there, boys 'n' girls). Back when Valiant was still rity, this book kind of just crept out and hid out there in comic book land. When the big "V" hit the big time, fans began to gobble up all the more popular back issues like *Solar* and *Magnus*. When they finally turned their attention to lil' old *Harbinger* #1, they realized that trying to get a copy of this book was like trying to ...to come up with an analogy for "asexually reproduced extraterrestrial parasitic longjohns." So the stampede started, and the price skyrocketed way out of the reach of most consumers.



© VALIANT

9 Uncanny X-Men #201

Artist: Rick Leonardi
Writer: Chris Claremont

Getting an extra boost of popularity thanks to some innuendos thrown around during the "X Cutioner's Song" storyline that recently ran through Marvel's mutant line of comics is the ever controversial Cable baby issue of *Uncanny X-Men*. Is Cable actually the futuristic son of Scott Summers and a clone of Jean Grey? The question has plagued comic fans for nearly a year, and it finally looks like those wacky Marvel editors are ready to shed some light on this, possibly the greatest mystery to mankind since the "less filling/tastes great" controversy that claimed hundreds of lives years ago. So will Marvel give the full scoop on the Baby Cable scenario? I wouldn't hold my breath (or yours for that matter).

© MARVEL

10 Shadowhawk #1

Artist: Jim Valentino
Writer: Jim Valentino

I'd almost forgotten about those kookie Image guys. Can't do that now...can we? So why *Shadowhawk* and not *Spawn*, *Youngblood* or one of the more high-profile Image books? It's that killer cover. It's flat black and has the coolest silver embossing on the logo and the Shadowhawk face. The story deals with a costumed vigilante who takes a rather unique approach to handling the evildoers he nabs. Instead of handing them over to the coppers, he snaps their spines. Mighty painful sounding, ain't it? He/she (Hawk's identity is a secret even to the reader) does this because of the pathetic state of the American legal system. As a side note, how bad do you feel for jaywalkers in the Image universe?

© JIM VALENTINO

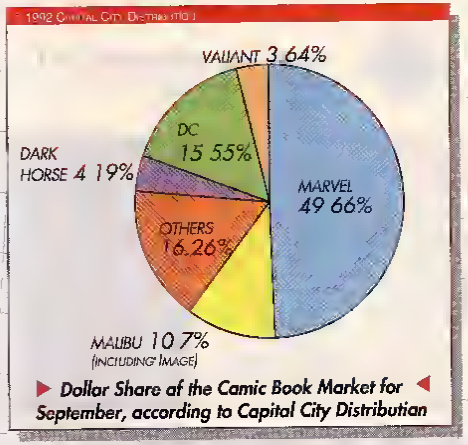
Wizard Market Watch

● In an industry dominated by pretty gimmicks and empty stories, Valiant has shown that a comic can be successful and still be a good comic. With a tight, coherent universe that's filled with believable characters and storylines that tie in to broader stories, Valiant has really formed a strong fan following that has made them one of the most powerful publishers in the industry. Their commitment to quality and their rapport with the fans ensures that the future for Valiant is a very bright one.

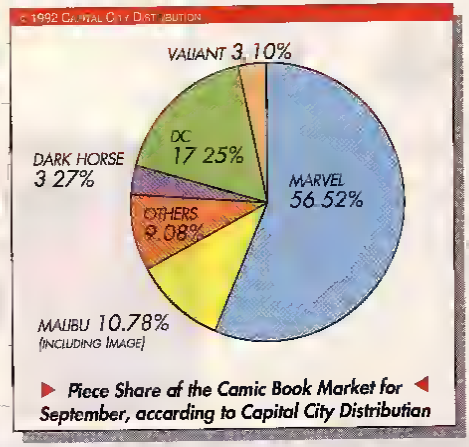
As for their back issues, every dealer you meet will tell you the hottest things in stock (or rather, out of stock) are any of the Valiant titles. Be it a comic from a year back (*Magnus, Solar*), a book from several months ago (*Rai, Shadowman*), or even the books that have just hit the shelves or have yet to hit the shelves (*Bloodshot, Magnus* #21), Valiant is what's hot! A quick look at their best movers includes *Magnus* #5 with the first appearance of *Rai*, *Magnus* #12 with the first appearance of Turok (soon to star in his own monthly title), *Rai* #0 with the entire future of the Valiant universe laid bare, *Eternal Warrior* #4+5 featuring the debut of Bloodshot, and *Harbinger* #1, one of the least-printed Valiant books of all time — all extremely popular back issues.

● Marvel Comics remains the biggest bad boy on the block as far as new issue sales are concerned. Their line of Spider-Man and mutant titles are at the head of the pack, with various books like *The Punisher* and supernatural comics like *Ghost Rider*, *Morbius* and *Spirits of Vengeance* close behind. Expect sales of the Spider-Man and X-Men titles to increase as the X-Men cartoon hits the airwaves in just a short time and rumors circulate concerning the live action Spider-Man movie supposedly directed by James Cameron and reportedly due sometime in '93/'94.

As far as back issues go, Marvel has a couple of hot diddies cookin' on the stove. The hotter back issues include just about any appearance of the major Marvel bad dudes. Thanos,



▶ *Dollar Share of the Comic Book Market for September, according to Capital City Distribution* ◀



▶ *Piece Share of the Comic Book Market for September, according to Capital City Distribution* ◀

Sabertooth and Carnage. First appearances notwithstanding, the majority of their early appearances are going for some serious buckage. Other hot characters include Nomad and his early appearances in the pages of *Captain America*, *Death's Head II* and the original *Death's Head* series.

● Image Comics is still the talk of the town, though store owners and fans alike have expressed great dissatisfaction with the constant delays involved with almost all of their books. Though it has yet to affect the sales of any of their new titles, it would be a major step to strengthen their public ties if they could publish on a regular schedule. On a whole, the aftermarket value of Image comics has been positive, with the "Image Month" editions that contain redeemable coupons experiencing strong sales.

As of yet, there's no word on a price for the limited edition Gold *WildC.A.T.s* #1 that was just released. For every 100 copies of *WildC.A.T.s* #1 a retailer ordered, they could place an order for one copy of the special edition, half of which were hand signed by *WildC.A.T.s* creator/artist/writer Jim Lee. On the topic of special editions, keep an eye out for the upcoming *Darker Image* title that will feature more mature storylines. It's due out sometime in '93, and will also have a limited edition. Where the regular issue will be in full color, polybagged and come with one of three Image trading cards, the limited edition will come unbagged, cardless and in black-and-white.

● The death of Superman has certainly brought DC Comics a great deal of publicity. Every aspect of the media has brought the Man of Steel's demise into the spotlight, and public reaction to this is similar to the media circus surrounding the death of Robin several years back. Comic stores everywhere are experiencing flocks of consumers who normally wouldn't purchase comic books coming in and demanding copies of this historic issue. It would be safe to assume that the aftermarket value of this will increase quickly and dramatically, but one has to wonder how long that value will be maintained. Take into account similar media-hyped issues like the aforementioned *Batman* #428, as well as *Superman* #50 (the engagement of Lois and Clark), *Batman* #457(new Robin costume) and *Action Comics* #662 (Superman's I.D revealed to Lois). All of these experienced massive price increases due to outside influences and soon after the media-blitz faded, so did the value. Proceed with caution.

● On the whole, the alternative market is suffering in both original market sales and aftermarket value. Such back issue giants as *Cerebus* and *The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* have experienced a drop in back issue sales and their earlier, more sought after issues have dropped considerably in value. The Turtles' drop could be due to the lack of any type of strong media push for quite some time. This slump could change in early '93 as the movie *T.M.N.T. III* is tentatively scheduled for an April release. *Cerebus* on the other hand, has simply been reprinted to death. Fans who want to read the various storylines can simply pick up one of the multitudes of reprint editions and specials for next-to-nothing, compared to the original issue prices.

These are just two isolated incidents of the recent "cooling-down" of the alternative market. The majority of the comic-buying crowd seems fixated on spending their money on the newer super-hype issues of Marvel and Image Comics(either that or it's just a small group of collectors buying some serious multiple copies). As far as back issues go, Valiant has claimed that territory, with Silver Age Marvel and DC closing the gap ■

WIZARD'S TOP TEN HOTTEST ARTISTS

1. TODD McFARLANE
SPAWN

2. JIM LEE
WildC.A.T.s

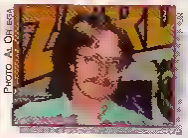
3. ROB LIEFELD
YOUNGBLOOD

4. MARC SILVESTRI
CYBERFORCE

5. DALE KEOWN
THE PITT

6. WHILCE PORTACIO
WETWORKS

7. SAM KIETH
MARVEL COMICS PRESENTS
UPCOMING DARKER IMAGE



8. MARK BAGLEY
AMAZING SPIDER-MAN

9. RON LIM
INFINITY WAR

10. JOHN BYRNE
NEXT MEN, SHE-HULK

WIZARD PRICE GUIDE

About The Price Guide

Compiled in the following Comic Book Price Guide is the most accurate listing for comic books available in the market today. For the most up-to-the-minute values, we are constantly in touch with store owners and show dealers while Wizard "scouts" are checking prices incognito in stores throughout the country. All values listed in this guide are for comic books in Near Mint condition. Keep in mind that this is only a guide and prices may vary depending upon the location of the comic book dealer, availability of a title and its current popularity. All values are subject to change depending on market conditions.

How To Use This Price Guide

When a book has changed in value since last month's listing, it is shaded by either a colored bar or a gray bar. If the comic has risen in value, it will have a colored bar. If the comic has lowered in value, it will have a gray bar.

EXAMPLE:

200	3.00
201	3.00
202	4.00
203	4.00
204	3.00
205	3.00
206	3.00
207	3.00
208	3.00
209	2.00
210	2.00
210	3.00
211	3.00

In the example issues #202 and #203 have risen in value since last month, and issues #209 and #210 have dropped in value. This does not necessarily mean that the comics will continue to rise or drop in the months ahead.

Abbreviations

ARTISTS/WRITERS

AAd	Art Adams
AAu	Adam Austin (Gene Colan)
ABa	Alfred Bester
ABi	Al Bigley
ABl	Adam Blanstein
ABr	Allyn Brodsky
ACo	Amanda Conner
ADa	Alan Davis
ADr	Arnold Drake
AGn	Archie Goodwin
AGo	Adrian Gonzales
AGr	Alan Grant
AHe	Andrew Helfer
AHn	Adam Hughes
AJo	Averell Jones
AKb	Andy Kubert
AKn	Andy Kahn
AKo	Alexi Kondratiev
AKp	Alan Kupperberg
AKu	Adam Kubert
ALa	Andy Lanning
ALo	Arvin Loudermilk
AMe	Angel Medina
AMi	Al Milgrom
AMo	Alan Moore
ANi	Art Nichols
ANo	Ann Nocenti
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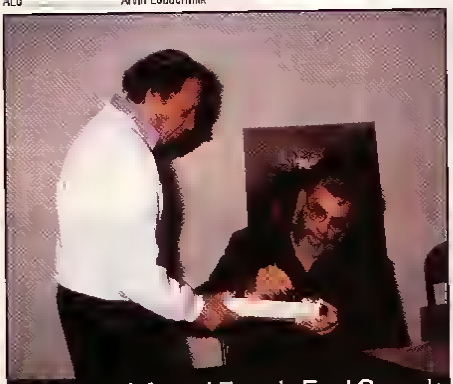

Bob Kane, left, and Francis Ford Coppola

Two wild and crazy guys...
Marat Mychaels, left, and Erik Larsen.

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ANNUAL 5 JBg LSr FF New Mutnts Days/Future Pres 5 00
ANNUAL 6 3 00
ANNUAL 7 JQu FNi Shattershot p3 2 25

PRISONER OF LOVE

SC Beast 4 95

X-FARCE

ECLIPSE

1 BHn OCh X-Force parody 2 50

X-FORCE

MARVEL

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Black UPC Cable card 6 00
1B White UPC Cable card 6 00
1C Black UPC Shatterstar card 4 00
1D White UPC Shatterstar card 4 25
1E Black UPC Deadpool card 3 25
1F White UPC Deadpool card 3 50
1G Black UPC Sunspot card 3 25
1H White UPC Sunspot card 3 50
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1K (an unbagged copy w/o card) 1 75
1L 2nd print 1 75
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3 RLd FNi Spider-Man vs Juggernaut 4 00
4 RLd FNi Juggernaut Spider-Man, Black Tom Cassidy Deadpool 4 00
5 RLd FNr 1 New Brotherhood of Evil Mutants 3 55
6 RLd FNi vs New Brotherhood 2 75
7 RLd FNr v New Brotherhood Kane 2 50
8 RLd/MMi FNi O Cable 1 Wildpack 3 00
9 RLd FNi D Sauron D Masque Cannonball now a Highlord 2 50
10 MPc RLd Kane vs Stryfe 2 25
11 MPc RLd Deadpool vs Shatterstar 1 real Domino 2 00
12 MPc FNi Gideon 1 Crule 1 75
13-17 1 25
ANNUAL 1 Shattershot p4 O Shatterstar 2 25

X-MEN

MARVEL

1A JLe CCI Storm and Beast cover 2 00
1B JLe CCI Colossus and Gambit cover 2 00
1C JLe CCI Wolverine and Cyclops cover 2 25
1D JLe CCI Magneto cover 2 00
1E JLe CCI 1 Acolytes PF 3 95
2 JLe CCI vs Magneto 3 00
3 JLe Last CCI X-Men D Magneto & Acolytes 2 75
4 JLe JBy I Omega Red 2 25
5 JLe SLo R Longshot 1 Maverick 3 00
6 JLe SLo Omega Red Maverick Sabretooth s new costume Mojo, O&R Sabretooth 4 00
7 JLe SLo Omega Red 2 25
8 JLe SLo Gambit v Bishop 2 00
9 JLe SLo D Belladonna vs Ghost Rider, Brood 2 00
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11 15 1 25
ANNUAL 1 JLe FNi 1 Mojo II Shattershot p1 2 25

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MARVEL

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GN Animation Special 10 95

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X-TINCTION AGENDA

TPB 19 95

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3 rep Uncanny X-Men #61-62 3 75

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48 rep Uncanny X-Men #144 1 75
49 rep Uncanny X-Men #145 1 75
50 rep Uncanny X Men #146 1 75
51 rep Uncanny X-Men #147 1 75
52 rep Uncanny X-Men #148 1 75
53 rep Uncanny X Men #149 1 75
54 rep Uncanny X-Men #150 1 75
55 rep Uncanny X-Men #151 1 75
56 rep Uncanny X-Men #152 1 75
57 rep Uncanny X-Men #153 1 75
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70 rep Uncanny X-Men #166 1 50
71 rep Uncanny X-Men #167 1 50
72 rep Uncanny X-Men #168 1 50
73 rep Uncanny X-Men #169 1 50
73 rep Uncanny X-Men #170 1 50
74-78 reprints 1 25

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Bob Asselin
Jason Alexander
Nick Barrucci
Greg Buls
William Christiansen
Ilana "Snoopy Feet" Graf
Nate "The Nase" Graf
Richard "Rancor" Holland
Jan Huston
Robert Samsel
Gerald Schranz

ANSWERS

The answers to issue #13's contest featuring a trip to Hamage Studios will be released when *Cyberforce* #2, featuring part 2 of the contest, has been produced. (Don't miss it, kids!)

Patrick Daniel O'Neil, Editor Pat McCallum, Asst. Editor

MAGIC WORDS

Wizard Press P.O. Box 648 Nanuet NY 10954-0648

Dear Wizard:

So the question before the group is "Who will betray the X-Men?, huh? Of course, the obvious answer is a resounding *who cares*?!? It's been years since any of the X-books were interesting enough to bother with. Oh, I admit I still buy them, but only for the art. If you go back a couple of years and read the various titles straight on through, you discover that they're little more than one continuous fight scene. Characters pop in and out willy nilly, plot threads dangle unresolved for years, and the interchangeable villains (could anyone even tell the difference among Stryfe, Mr. Sinister, and Apocalypse if they were out of costume?) all grin a lot. Oh yeah, Wolverine gets the snot beat out of him every other issue.

Perhaps the worst of the lot is Cable. It amazes me that a character with all the personality of a two-by-four can be so popular. The guy is a one trick pony. A can of Spam is more interesting.

If the fanboys want to see what they *could* be getting from the mutant books, let me recommend *Uncanny X-Men* #94-166. Back then, Chris Claremont was still hot and the X-Men were still three-dimensional. The series has never been as good since.

Anyway, now that I've gotten *that* off my chest, let's talk about the rest of *Wizard* #14. First of all, somebody tell Tom Palmer that at least one person reads his column: me! His synopsis of the work of Alan Moore was quite interesting. I had not realized just how much stuff Moore has written over the years.

Bart Sears' Brutes & Babes section is also one of the magazine's highlights. While we must remember that it's only one guy's approach to drawing, that one guy is very, very good at it. (Aside to Bart— the second hand holding a can next to the "proportion" paragraph: change the label on the can to "Posters" and it would be about right.)

The Thibert & O'Neill piece was interesting without being extraordinary, given the nature of the magazine. The Neal Adams interview, though... neat! I hope his company, Continuity, can get on some thing resembling a normal schedule, 'cause I've been a fan of his for a long time.

Next we come to the by now obligatory Image article. These boys oughta be paying you for all the free advertising you give them. Of course, you could do 200 pages a month on Image and still not satisfy the demand that's out there right now. What that bunch is doing is like the first breath of spring to the big two's long winter.

But that's enough of that. My favorite section of the magazine is Amazing Art. I love seeing what other fans can do. Some of the stuff is surprisingly good, and I won't be surprised to see a few of the contributors turn pro.

The section on cards and toys doesn't interest me much since I don't collect either one, but I can tell from the letters you publish that the people who are into that stuff appreciate the info. Ditto the price guide. I get more than fifty titles a month, but I doubt I'll ever sell any of them. I buy comics because I like them, not as an investment.

On the whole, you've got one of the best publications currently on the market relating to our little hobby. About the only change I could want would be more pages so that you can fit even more neat stuff into each issue.

Mike Lansley
Mechanicsville, MD

Thanks for the comments Mike. As for the added pages, you can see that *Wizard* is slowly but surely creeping towards that magic 200 number.

Dear Wizard:

After I read the Special Edition of *Wizard* (you know, the one with the awesome cover) I had to write you this letter. I waited very patiently for it to hit the stands at the comic book store I go to. Let me say it was worth the wait. Everything in it was so fantastic. I purchased a second issue the next day. I don't think you could top that cover at all. (Or maybe you can... please read on.)

Now that I have your attention, this is what I propose. How about the same size poster on the inside of She-Hulk? Ask around. I'll bet 12 dozen people would agree. You guys can ask John (I Like Drawing She-Hulk in a Sexy Pose) Byrne to do the cover. This fan would buy three copies. You have my word if she ever appears on any cover of *Wizard* I'll buy three copies. Well that's it from here, thanks for your time, and thanks for listening.

Rob Gould
Weymouth, MA

P.S. Upon your request in #12 there is a little something inserted with this to get it printed. No need to send it back, I have the set.

Glad you liked the Special Edition, we had a lot of fun putting it together. As for a She-Hulk cover, we just got one in and it is without a doubt the hottest She-Hulk pic I have ever seen, and this is coming from a guy who has the closest thing to a crush you can get on a fictional character. Who is it by? Heh, heh, heh... Oh, and as for your bribe, N-I-C-E choice, dude. Now I gotta get the rest of the set.

Dear Wizard:

I went to the San Diego Comic Con '92 all the way from Philadelphia this year (a gift from my parents for getting A's last year in school). It was worth the trip. It was the most incredible thing I've ever seen (aside from Psylocke in a bathing suit in Marvel's Swimsuit Issue). I went to the Wizard booth and there I met the "Big Cheese," the almighty, world renowned Gareb S. Shamus. He appeared much more stocky

in person. Not at all like the skinny little nerd he seemed to appear as in his pictures. I asked him to sign my limited edition *Wizard* special on the plastic. I think I ticked him off. "I don't make the plastic!" he said. "I make the book!" He frightened me so I opened up the plastic and he violently signed my book. I guess he has something against plastic signing of something. Well I hope he continues to stay the nice wholesome young president of Wizard that comic book fans have come to know and love.

Frank Tartaglia
Philadelphia, PA

Oooooooo... Now you've done it. Gareb himself is going to answer your letter (and you thought he was scary in San Diego...)
A what? A what? A skinny little nerd—is that what you think? Well, I'm glad that I've dispelled your worst nightmare—I've put on a few pounds, and I try to be cool—really I try. I hope I wasn't "violent" or frightening. I like all Wizard fans. In any case, I don't like signing polybags in general because the polybag is only used to keep the card in, so I only like to sign what we produced—the magazine.
I'm truly glad you stopped by to say hello and I'm happy you enjoyed the show; I also had a great time! See ya soon, "The Big Cheese"
P.S. If you ever call me "nerd" again, I will personally drive to Philly and beat you to an unrecognizable jelly.

Dear Wizard:

The first issue of *Wizard* that I had bought was #13. I must say, it was... fantastic! Keep it up! Before I go, I have a question. Before Wolverine got his retractable claws, what were his old ones made of? Thanks again for your awesome *Wizard*!

Scooby
East Brady, PA

He didn't have claws before the adamantium ones.

Dear Wizard:

I just read through the Special Edition, which advertises inside the front cover that *Wizard* is "A Book You Can Judge By It's Cover!". I hope it's not true.

I've noticed annoying typographical and grammatical mistakes in earlier issues. But the Special Edition is riddled with typographical errors that should be weeded out of any publication of reasonable quality. One guest artist was shown as being from "Sadbury, Ontario" instead of Sudbury, perhaps a forgivable error if you're not familiar with your readership to the north. Being a Canadian, that got me. But in addition, lots of ordinary mistakes simply missed your proofreader.

Worse yet are the grammatical errors a grade nine student should have discovered. You'll notice that the word "its" in my first paragraph above (quoted exactly) should not have an apostrophe. So should lots of the words that have them inside the magazine. The opposite is true, too, in various places, with "you're" appearing as "your", "they're" showing up as "their" and so on.

Content-wise, I enjoyed the Special Edition. I hope you'll shape up the little annoying things and make *Wizard* a really excellent magazine, worth the CAN$4.95 + GST I have to pay for the regular editions!

Yours sincerely,

Larry Derkach
Edmonton, Alberta

We're working on it.
We certainly are working on it, but like everything in life, sometimes proofreading slips through the cracks. In the rush to get a last-minute column into the issue, somebody forgets to send it past the proofreaders...or the corrected copy gets misplaced and the uncorrected copy winds up going to the typesetter.
I think our level of typoes and other errors is several orders of magnitude better now than it was in the first half-dozen issues. And it will get better, I promise.
-Pat O'Neill

Dear Wizard:

Is it just me or did anyone else notice that the only Image comic to come out during Image Comics Month (August) was *Shadowhawk*? Are the guys at Image ever going to get a book out on time?

Erik Pfingstan
Columbia Station, OH

There are some things even the Wizard can't answer.

Dear Wizard:

I am soooo happy that Dark Horse came out with the new *Star Wars* comics. I've been collecting the old Marvel series and have been waiting for the new movie. I have a very important question (for me). In #3 (Dark Horse), how can Boba Fett be alive? I mean in *Return of the Jedi* he was, or had to be, totally consumed by the Sarlacc Pit. Well, anyway, thanx!

Karan Righaimar
Batavia, IL

If you care enough about Mr. Fett to write a letter, you, like myself, must be a pretty big fan of the wav-cool bounty hunter dude, and must have been equally P.O.'ed when he bit the big one in a really lame way in *Jedi*. So there I was, depressed for years until I started reading D.H.'s *Star Wars: Dark Empire* series. Geez, I almost fell off *my* tauntaun! There he was, the coolest dude in the omniverse, back among the living! Hooray! Of course! How simple would it be for Boba to rewire his little jet pack doohickey and zoom out of the pit. Ha, he's so clever you gotta love *him*. (At least that's how I see it.)

Dear Wizard:

In response to the who's the traitor, I think it's Rogue and it will probably happen in *Uncanny* #300 for some big storyline. I think it's Rogue because: 1) She used to be a bad guy before she joined the X-Men. 2) She has the power to do it. She could take off her gloves and smack everyone and they'd all be in a coma, plus no one can hurt her. 3) In *X-Men* 8 when Bishop told Prof. X to scan Gambit's mind she didn't want him to. Maybe she wants everyone to think it's him so no one will suspect it's her. 4) Gambit likes her but they can't touch each other so they'll probably kill her so Gambit can get a new girlfriend because that's the kind of stuff they do at Marvel such as Cyclops and Madeline Pryor, and Human Torch and that Skrull chick.

Ryan Boattchar
Lakewood, CO

And the debate rages on. Who offed the X-Men? I still think it's Forge, but we're holding a Wizard "X-Traitor" poll anyway. Just send your theory of who the traitor is, why he/she/them(?) turned traitor and what issue it will be revealed in, to "The X-Traitor" care of this letters page address, and the person(s) who *comes* the closest when the truth finally comes out will be awarded... I don't know, *something*. (I'll start printing *some* fan theories next issue.)

Dear Wizard:

Your mag is great! The posters are cool, I love the cards you give away, and the articles are great. But I have some questions.

1) Whatever happened to Rictor (formerly of the New Mutants)?

2) In #13 you list *New Mutants* #99 as being the first appearance of Feral and

Shatterstar. It isn't. *New Mutants* #100 is.

3) In #10 you list *X-Men* #11 without mentioning that Mojo died in that issue.

4) Wouldn't Ghost Rider burn his clothes off? Does hellfire burn?

Well, thanks for printing this (if you do). I'll keep buying *Wizard* as long as you print it.

Peter Desrochers
Woonsocket, RI

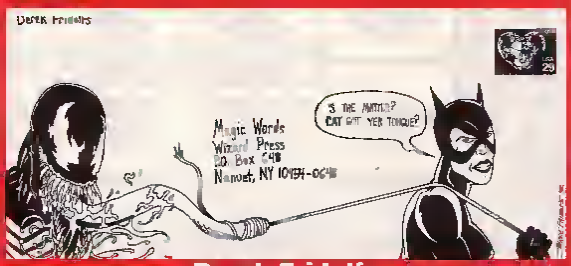
OK... Deep breath, here we go...
1) Check out current issues of *X-Force*
2) No, *N M* #99 is. Check again.
3) No one dies in Marvel (ask Jean Grey)
4) Now you got me thinking, if Ghost Rider did burn all his clothes off and then ride around on his bike, wouldn't he get chilly and catch a cold? And every time he went to wipe his nose, wouldn't the Kleenex catch fire and doom the spirit of vengeance to a very messy existence? This would make a great "What if...?"

"It's time we have to say... Goodbye..." Yup, *Wizard* #16 is almost at an end, but before I go, a couple of things. A quick note to Marcos Garcia of Brownsville, TX. Next issue we'll have the big Valiant coverage, this Image cover was kinda last minute. A quick alien alert to Joshua Little of Kingfisher, the only way you could have seen some of the uncut scenes of *Aliens* is if you saw it on T.V., you got your hands on a bootleg copy, or you watched the tape from that special "Alien" tape package that has *Alien* & *Aliens* (both with additional footage) and the making of *Alien 3*. There are no plans to release uncut-*Aliens* as a single tape. Some good news though--CBS-Fox will release the *Aliens Special Collector's Edition* on laser disk for the low price (NOT) of $99.98. (A special tip of the Wizard's hat to Andy Mangels for the above info.)
And one last thing, if you read *Wizard*, and really don't like the mag, or don't like a section, or otherwise have a comment, no matter what, write in!!
UG... one *really* last thing. If you want to be a *Wizard* pen-pal, just write in c/o "Pen Pal" with your full name, address, and three of your favorite titles and you'll get your wish. OK, I'm outta here.

Pat McCallum

Fabulous LetterArt

Thanks for the terrific letter art. Every month our dedicated fans with talent to burn adorn their praise (or complaints) sometimes we think just to get a little extra attention. Guess what. It works. Here are four for this month!
(Remember, we can only show letter-size envelopes. Thanks!)



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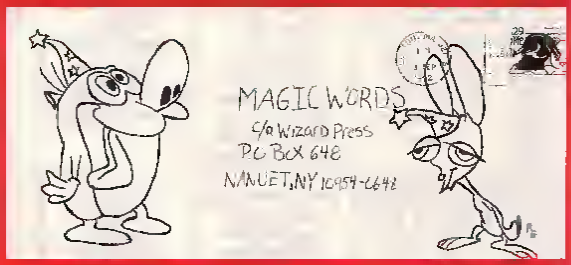
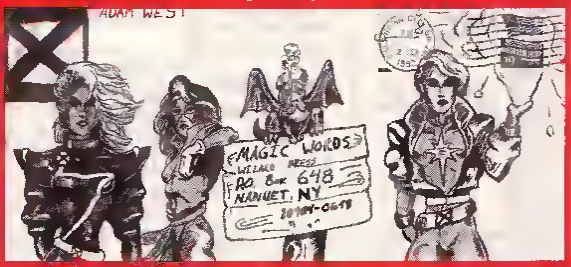
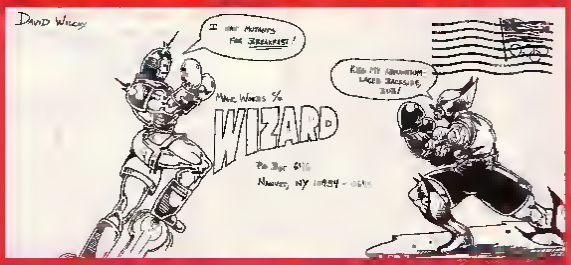


Rob Gould
Weymouth, MA



Adam West
Oklahoma City, OK



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